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*Private Letters*  
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AN ANTHOLOGY OF GREEK AND  
ROMAN PRIVATE LETTERS FROM  
THE FIFTH CENTURY BEFORE  
CHRIST TO THE FIFTH  
CENTURY OF  
OUR ERA

*selected by*  
*Lamb*  
DOROTHY BROOKE

LONDON

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TO  
J. R. B.

"This is of especial importance in letter-writing, to avoid superficial finery, and get as near as possible to the natural."—SAINT GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS.

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"La meilleure façon d'écrire, c'est encore de téléphoner."

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## INTRODUCTION

A COLLECTION of ancient private letters, translated into English, seems to need a word of apology, for anthologies are commonly despised, and the letters of antiquity, excepting those of Cicero and Pliny, have been neglected, poor relations, as they are, of the ancient literatures. To those who are bored by letters, and annoyed by anthologies, such a book can make no sort of appeal, nor can it claim a place in the world of serious studies. It is not for the scholar who can read the ancient languages for himself, and decide for himself what letters are worth reading, if, indeed, he thinks that any beside the familiar masterpieces should be read at all. It is not for the severe and uncompromising taste, whether of scholar or amateur, which rejects everything not by authors, or of periods, commonly called "best". Many of these letters were written in the "worst" periods, or if period or author be "good", the letters are not necessarily the best work of either, judged by a severely classic standard. Some are even illiterate: the illiterate letters are perhaps the most precious in the book, far lovelier than the gaudy literary flowers of some of the more illustrious pens; Pliny's eruption of Vesuvius, for instance, or Plutarch's letter of consolation, or Saint Basil's description of his Pontic retreat. All these are precisely that sort of "good letter"<sup>1</sup> against which Horace Walpole expressed himself so warmly. For the "good" letter is apt to exhibit just those qualities of self-consciousness and personal display, which spoil a letter, both for the recipient, and for the unintended reader like ourselves, who is looking for something else. For the inclusion of elaborate letters of this kind in this anthology, an apology alone is needed. No one would read or collect letters because they are good literary compositions; for a prose anthology more apt material can be

<sup>1</sup> "I hate letters that are called good letters."—*Horace Walpole to George Montague.*

found elsewhere: at the best, our interest in letters is historical, at the worst, and more frequently, it is a mere idle human gossiping curiosity, a desire to penetrate the façade which is all that we can see of most people, whether living or long dead. Letters can be as misleading as faces, but their fascination, and what we hope to find in them, is the unconscious revelation, the unguarded word, the chance to catch a nearer glimpse of the august figures of the past, to peep and listen at a moment when they are thinking themselves safe from prying eyes and ears. A letter which is to have value in a later age is that which had the most vigour when it was written, that was prompted by some fresh and irrepressible feeling. It must have been for the recipient's eye, and for his alone, for the occasion and the moment, not for the public or for posterity. A letter written to be kept is seldom worth keeping at all, just as the things best worth knowing about people are the things they do not want us to know at all. So it may turn out that not Cicero's letters nor Pliny's, but the letters of the Emperor Augustus, of Marcus Aurelius, silly as some of them are, the charming productions of Epicurus, and, centuries later, of Sidonius; Mnesiergus' vivid message,<sup>1</sup> or illiterate effusions like those of Antonius Longus, the prodigal son,<sup>2</sup> and little Theon, the spoilt child,<sup>3</sup> are among those we treasure most: the writers have opened their hearts to us, and even if we cannot always love them, at least we have had a glimpse of what they kept inside.

Unfortunately it was not the reckless, intimate letter that the ancients themselves treasured most. Those we now possess are chiefly what they themselves thought worth keeping, and, for reasons which we shall presently see, their taste in letters was not as ours. Unlike the lost plays of Euripides, most probably his worst, and the lost books of Livy, the letters we have lost, on the whole, must be the very letters we should most like to possess; Cicero's letters that the recipients thought unfit to keep, a glimpse of the polished Pliny, unguarded, scurrilous, or rude, if indeed he was ever any of these things: perhaps we shall never know. And how many of Cicero's extant letters would we not give for a few more by Mnesiergus and his kind? So if in this collection there are a certain number of "good" letters, pieces of the showy

<sup>1</sup> Letter 1.<sup>2</sup> xcii.<sup>3</sup> xcvi.



self-conscious type, deliberately written for publication, and a few official dispatches, for their presence here it is hoped that some redeeming feature, some personal flash, some touch of temper or fun or unintended self-revelation may atone. For his choice of what he gathers is the one thing for which an anthologist need never apologise. He is not compiling that vast and sombre thing, a "*Corpus*", for which completeness and mass, as in the mummy exhibits of the British Museum, must atone, rather than interest and intelligent choice. His office is to pick and reject according to his fancy, and there is no one to gainsay him if occasionally he plucks a dandelion and rejects a rose.

Letters, both good and bad, genuine letters, imaginary letters, "forged" letters, form no small proportion of the literary remains of the ancient world. For there can be no sort of doubt that while at any moment of antiquity, owing to cost of materials and transit, a letter might be a matter of importance, at certain times, especially in the Roman age, letter-writing was almost a disease.

Already, by the time of Demetrius of Phalerum, the orator who became librarian at Alexandria to Ptolemy I., the epistolary art had become so elaborate, and so self-conscious, that he could classify letters under twenty-one heads, which included the *Allegorical*, the *Vituperative*, the *Objurgatory* and the *Ironic*, extended in a later age by Proclus, the sophist, to forty-one, including the *Enigmatic*, the *Irritating*, the *Eucharistic*, the *Begging* and the *Mixed*, with such an inventory of epistolary moods that we only seem to miss the *Counter-check Quarrelsome*, the *Lie Circumstantial* and the *Lie Direct*, and but for the grand solemnity of it all, could fancy ourselves in Arden. Like the strange and antic habit of making speeches, with which every schoolboy and girl is all too painfully familiar, letter-writing was one of the principal diversions of the later Greek, and of the Roman, world. Cicero's enormous literary prestige set up a standard in letter-writing which has dominated succeeding ages, from the Fathers to the eighteenth century, and no one who subsequently has tried to make a literary display in a letter has ever had Cicero quite out of his head.

The Greek world might write letters when they were needed, when something of importance had to be sent or said, might even

elevate the performance to an art; the Roman world wrote letters when there was nothing else to do, and as in all highly developed societies, frequently indeed when, owing to the state of public affairs, invasions, rebellions, revolutions, murders, wars, the reverse might be expected, there seems to have been not enough to do. Cicero, not only in exile with time on his hands, but in the thick of affairs or of civil war, wrote letters tirelessly; letters several times a day to Atticus or Tiro, letters to the other end of Europe or the next street, letters that tell the inner history of an age as none other has ever been unfolded, or letters about nothing in particular, the most elegant letters ever written about nothing at all. The obligation to write letters seems always to have transcended all changes and chances in the lives of the writers or the world around them; and when we come to Symmachus, the great Prefect of Rome and Consul at the close of the fourth century, under three convulsive reigns, with the old gods, whom he strove to save, toppling about his ears and the empire threatened from without on all sides by barbarians, and its highest offices already in their hands, we find him inditing volumes of letters, of which the majority tell nothing of public affairs and are of a quite astonishing vacuity.

Through the first five centuries of our era, to the break-up of the classic language and the western Roman world, the letter was a favourite literary form. Whether addressed to an individual, a group of people, a city, an army or even a state, it was a kind of written speech. In all the universities of the empire, from Antioch and Athens to Lyons and Bordeaux, rhetoric was the beginning of all education, and sometimes the end. With the disappearance of the ancient democracies, the ancient art of speech-making had lost much of its natural employment, and had to find new channels. There were still the law-courts, the professor's chair and the pulpit; and for anyone who temporarily or in general could not command an audience, or who belonged to the leisured and landed classes, there was the letter. To write elegant letters was the readiest way of showing a mastery of the rhetorician's art, and the education of a gentleman. Letters might be literary exercises, and literary exercises might be letters; or if ostensibly private, following Pliny's example, they might be

written for publication; people kept one another's letters, wrote in the hope that the recipients would keep them, hoped to be mentioned in one another's letters and to go down to posterity in this way if in no other. By the end of the fourth century letters, and the etiquette that ruled them, had become a formidable burden upon daily life. A friend who had left home should be the first to write to those remaining behind, and a letter in contravention of this rule must open with an apology and explanation. Many of Symmachus' letters, someone has said, are no more than a visiting-card. In face of the vast number of his letters which have reached us, probably a fraction only of those he actually wrote, it is impossible to be surprised that he wished that correspondence could be carried on, in the manner of savage tribes, by means of notches on a stick. Fortunately not all of those who wrote after the best models, or even with an eye to publication, could restrain their own spontaneous natures from speaking out. Saint Gregory of Nazianzus was himself the author of an absurd and elaborate essay in the form of a letter, on the art of letter-writing;<sup>1</sup> but not all the rules he laid down for others could restrain him, when writing to a friend, from speaking the truth from his heart, and both Synesius and Sidonius, who were most admired as letter-writers, and had considerable literary pretensions, contrived to retain a natural simplicity, sincere and unspoiled.

Rhetorical proficiency was one of the roads to ecclesiastical as well as to secular eminence. From Saint Paul to Saint Patrick the epistolary form held sway. The Apostle had used the letter, and sanctioned the form; the Fathers, educated for the most part in the schools of rhetoric, could hardly be expected to escape the almost universal craze. Augustine, Ambrose, Basil, the Gregorys, Chrysostom, all took pride in their epistolary performances, and were capable of swallowing any amount of flattery on the subject from their friends. Between the sermon and the letter the dividing line is hard to find; when no flock was at hand, brethren at a distance could be made recipients of pastoral fulminations, scriptural exegesis, doctrinal pronouncements, and could be relied upon not to confine a letter to their own private edification. The early controversies fed upon letters and waxed fat. Distance and good

<sup>1</sup> Letter No. CLVI.

communications gave unlimited opportunity to unbridled argument, to misrepresentations, to scandal and false rumours. Letters would cross one another, be shown to people for whom they were never intended, and quarrels and misunderstandings could be protracted almost indefinitely.

There was scarcely anything that could not be the subject of a letter. An absent son might write his parents long letters on the nature and value of monastic life. Atticus, Bishop of Constantinople, wrote to the princesses, daughters of the Emperor Arcadius, a letter on Faith and Virginity, "a most excellent work in which he attacks by anticipation the Nestorian doctrine". Another divine wrote to two devout sisters, who had been disinherited by their parents for their chastity and devotion to religion, "consolatory letters in polished and lucid language, fortified not only by argument, but also by testimonies from the Scriptures". Let us hope the sisters were duly consoled. Among the mass of pious and hortatory letters, of festal epistles and scriptural exegesis in epistolary form, it is impossible not to feel grateful to one Gelasius, said by Saint Jerome to write "more or less in a carefully polished style, but not to publish his works".

This amazing vogue of letter-writing in the Roman age was largely assisted by circumstance. The Roman world, with its complete systems of communication, slow as they may seem by modern standards, its highly cultivated officials posted at great distances from its centre and from one another, was an ideal world for letter-writers to flourish in. Friends and relatives might be sundered by thousands of miles for years at a time. Spaniards might serve in Mesopotamia, Greeks or Syrians in Britain; still the long roads joined them, and facility and frequency of communication made light of distance, and kept them in touch with their friends. Messengers and couriers flowed along the roads like blood in the arteries of the body. Though there was never any postal service in the modern sense of the word, there was no lack of ways and means to dispatch letters. Government communications travelled by post-riders; after the time of Augustus, by the public post-carriages; not public in our sense, but (subject to a certain amount of corruption and abuse) reserved for state documents and messengers, and authorised persons and packets.

Eustathius' letter to the Emperor Julian<sup>1</sup> indicates that the privilege of using these vehicles might not be altogether an advantage. But from the end of the Republic every wealthy Roman, among his regular paraphernalia of opulence, kept a staff of letter-carriers, who came and went among his friends. The messenger who brought a letter would wait for an answer, the recipient of a chatty budget might be called upon to leave his present avocations and toss off an adequate reply, or at least a few elegant, if vacuous, lines, literally by return of post. Loud were the complaints if a courier came back empty-handed, and there are signs that the habit of instructing a messenger not to return without a reply might cause annoyance comparable to what is sometimes occasioned in our own day by the telephone. The big commercial firms who organised transport by road and river must have carried letters as well as merchandise, for everyone could not employ a private carrier, and distance seems never to have offered any hindrance.

Under Nero the already voluminous exchange of letters had received a check, owing to the dangers attendant upon private letters, which might be intercepted and used as information; but by the time of the Antonines the bulk of the correspondence travelling about the empire must have been enormous. Galen, medical adviser at the court of Marcus Aurelius, corresponded with patients in all parts of the empire, gave medical advice by letter to people many days' journey away, and received simples for his medicines from everywhere. There is every reason to picture the Roman roads in the third and fourth centuries of our era as crowded with traffic, with vehicles, beasts of burden, tourists and messengers of every kind. Wealthier private persons and families of distinction travelled with what were virtually caravans of retainers and household goods, in carriages so well sprung that they could read and write as they drove along. Even the circumstances of travel afforded no hindrance to the ceaseless production of letters: the determined letter-writer could continue his activities as he journeyed on his way.

Ease of communication was not the sole encouragement which the Roman empire gave the letter-writer; it gave him also

<sup>1</sup> CXVI.



his other vital necessity, a plentiful supply of paper. Paper, as we know it, came to Europe in the eighth century of our era through the Arabs, from the Chinese. But papyrus-paper, which for brevity may legitimately be called paper, had in the Roman empire almost the common uses of paper at the present day. Manufactured for the most part only in Egypt, from an indigenous plant, its use could spread only as the Egyptians were prepared to part with it. It was certainly used in Greece, but till the Hellenistic age little is heard of it outside Egypt; the foundation of Alexandria, however, and the modern organisation of Egypt under the Ptolemies, seem to have stimulated the industry, and encouraged the papyrus farmers, who must have been an economic buttress of the Ptolemaic kingdom. Taxes on the export of papyrus, though they stimulated the parchment factories of Pergamon, could not kill the foreign demand for a commodity so suitable by its light weight for letters, books and parcels, and for every purpose not requiring the durable qualities of parchment. Rome, however, can hardly have been very lavishly supplied until the Romanisation of Egypt gave her for the first time an easy command of the quantities of paper required by a civilised community. By the 1st century A.D. paper was nearly as common at Rome as it is now, though dearer and less readily destroyed; there was parcel paper, paper for letters, bills and books. A single sheet might in various ways be used over and over again, both for written matter and for humbler purposes. Old letters, or the unsuccessful efforts of poet and author, carried the fish and the meat home from the shop, and, no doubt, lit the fire. Once there was an alarming moment; in the reign of Tiberius the papyrus crop failed, and a paper famine ensued. The ready letter-writer was faced with the costliness of parchment, or a return to tablets and wax, and a diminished output; the fish and meat with the ignominy of transit undisguised. But not for long. The next year's crop flourished, and a civilisation which depended on paper could again lift up its head.

If paper was an ordinary commodity in Rome, in Egypt, the ancient home of papyrus, it was in everybody's hand. If we are poor in the unsophisticated remains, in the humbler private and domestic letters of Greece and Rome, Ptolemaic and Roman

Egypt have left us better provided. Here are the letters<sup>1</sup> of people innocent of any literary training, most agreeably unconscious, like M. Jourdain, that they were writing "prose"; letters from the farmer, the shopkeeper, the slave, the freed man or woman, on domestic business and family and private affairs. Some of them are Greeks transplanted to the Nile Valley, some are Hellenised Egyptians. Later they are Romanised Egyptians, Italian colonists, and perhaps other races merged in the Roman world. They wrote Greek, or rather used it, for their communications, for many of them could not write at all, but had to dictate their messages to the village scribe; in either case their spontaneity, vigour of expression and lack of self-consciousness might be envied but hardly improved on by more cultivated writers. What the literary taste of their contemporaries in the schools of Athens, Rome and Antioch would have condemned as too plain and rude to publish, the blind hand of chance has lavishly preserved. The sands of the Libyan desert, so hostile to life, so amiable to the dead, have indiscriminately cherished what the educated critic would have thrown away. Buried in rubbish-heaps in the ruins of once flourishing farms and villages, or among the wrappings of the dead, the contents of the bureau-drawers and waste-paper baskets of the farmers and small merchants of the Fayoum district are as familiar to us as those of our own, or more so; the daily lives and small concerns of these unhonoured dead are known to us as the monuments of no other epoch have been revealed to the spade. Perhaps their records are a simple artless tale, and they chronicle small beer; but it is with trifles of a population's daily life, not with the weighty matters that engage historians, that the imagination can most readily restore the fabric of a vanished age.

Selection from this great mass of ancient letters has been guided, as already indicated, by a preference for the private and personal, rather than the public and monumental. Very many letters of great historical or literary importance have no place here: Nicias' long letter in the seventh book of Thucydides, Cicero's political letters, Horace's Epistles, letters echoed in Tacitus' *Annals* and *Histories*, Sallust's long letter to Caesar, many dedicatory letters such as Statius' to Stella, many an imposing

<sup>1</sup> Sections 3, 5, 7, 10.



composition, controversial or peaceable, in letter form by Saints or Fathers, have all been omitted, while the great polemical correspondences of theologians and emperors on the Arian question, which rent Europe and Asia for sixty years, are only faintly echoed. Here and there a familiar masterpiece has been passed over to make room for some less known, more recondite flower. A few imaginary letters, some of them dignified by scholars, with a mild and pardonable sensationalism, by the name of "forgeries", have been allowed to appear, as showing the hold which the letter form had established over the ancient literary world. Of these, the Amasis letter from Herodotus, the letters of Periander and the early philosophers drawn from Diogenes Laertius' entertaining work,<sup>1</sup> have the dignity of a certain age, like the Ming forgeries of Sung masterpieces, which experts in Chinese porcelains puzzle over but do not entirely despise. They have the merit of that eternal truth which is above circumstance, the world would be the poorer without them. "I fear I have been boring you with all my chatter", says the bore to the sage in Diogenes' life of Aristotle. "No, Sir," replies the sage, "not at all, for I was not attending to you." Diogenes Laertius, even if he was a liar, deserves to be believed.

Less reputable are the flimsy pieces of Alciphron and Philostratus, who seem to have suffered from an obsession of the epistolary form, and with something very trifling to say, chose the wrong form in which to say it. With more substantial gifts they might have been novelists; for the novel was in existence and there were models ready to hand for them to follow. What Philostratus needed was the easy music of the English seventeenth century lyric, written to be sung, and so sweet and soothing that no one would bother very much what it was about. The sum total of his achievement was to inspire one of the loveliest, if also one of the most hackneyed lyrics in the English tongue.<sup>2</sup>

With the large number of "forged" letters which make up the major portion of Rudolf Hercher's solemn *Epistolographi Graeci*,<sup>3</sup> this book has practically no concern.<sup>4</sup> Many of them had

<sup>1</sup> Diogenes may have obtained some of his material from an earlier compiler, Antigonus of Carystus, who lived in the 2nd century B.C.

<sup>2</sup> See letters Nos. cv, cvi.

<sup>3</sup> Paris, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> Two such letters of the cynic Crates are included here, Nos. cvii, cviii.

their reputations exploded long ago by the great Richard Bentley<sup>1</sup> with such expenditure of heavy ammunition as can only be likened to a charge of dynamite used to dispel a very small cloud of gnats. At any rate some acrid odour of the detonation seems to hang about them still, for if you mention them to any scholar he will look at you as if you had asked him to handle a high explosive; he is not only frightened, but his sensibilities are shocked. The majority of these letters are, however, of a singular dullness, and with the closing verses of certain Greek tragedies, may be regarded as among the original homes of the platitude.

Many a famous name must here abide our question. If the letter attributed to Plato that is included in this selection be indeed genuine, it certainly enriches our knowledge of the philosopher. Surely a forger, unless he wished to take away a great man's reputation, would hardly have fashioned such a poor, trivial, rambling thing. The most chaste writer who ever lived could write a rambling letter to her sister or her niece; Plato was hardly a chaste writer, and there is nothing in his writings to indicate that in private, and in relaxation, he might not have rambled. Epicurus, in these letters, springs to new and charming life, from the shadowy emblem of a philosophy which is traditionally misrepresented, to a living and lovable personality. Julius Caesar, almost alone of the great ones, is most characteristically himself;<sup>2</sup> his letters, which in Bacon's view excel all men's else, are not so much letters as telegrams. Augustus in his fragmentary letters is certainly himself, but not the grave and stately figure of the *Acts* and the *Monumentum*.<sup>3</sup> Trajan seems a fussy, pettifogging potentate absorbed in unimportant detail, unless we are to blame Pliny for a foolish administrator incapable of independent decision upon the smallest thing. In the one case it is well perhaps to recall Charlemagne counting the eggs used daily in the palace kitchen at Aix, and to reflect that the greatest of monarchs have loved to display their grasp of the most trivial details, and in the other to notice a clear, if restrained, note of impatience in No. LXXIII. Marcus Aurelius, in his silly outpourings to his tutor, is not quite the philosopher of the *Meditations*.<sup>4</sup> Saint Jerome, hurt and justly

<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of Phalaris*, 1695.

<sup>3</sup> See XLIII and XLIV.

<sup>2</sup> See XXIX.

<sup>4</sup> LXXVIII, LXXIX, LXXXI, LXXXII.

angry, putting arrogant young Augustine in his place<sup>1</sup> is not quite Dürer's saintly pedant: the lion was not always so domesticated by the threshold, he could wave his claws and roar. Saint Augustine, when he provoked his elders and betters, had just that art of avoiding rudeness, which is most exasperating.<sup>2</sup> Saint Chrysostom's affectionate and very similar letters to a large circle of pious lady friends, only a few of which are given here, suggest that the ladies lived too far apart to be able to compare their notes.<sup>3</sup> Synesius' remarks on the bad taste of his relations,<sup>4</sup> his avowed unorthodoxy, especially in the matter of the Resurrection, his violent reluctance to become an ecclesiastic,<sup>5</sup> Saint Gregory of Nazianzus' private opinion of the synods and councils of the Church,<sup>6</sup> have reached us surely by good luck, and by no intention of the writers. Sidonius' letter on the prodigal's return<sup>7</sup> is a monument of French thought; on no other soil could moral repentance, financial recovery due to the bride's ample *dot*, prayer, and ecclesiastical birth-control be so frankly and genially intermingled. Here and there a considered politic letter reveals more than the writer knew. Julian's agitated, awe-stricken letter to his uncle on the death of Constantius<sup>8</sup> explains quite clearly what his intentions had in reality been. And in Constantine's most statesmanlike attempt to compose the quarrels of Arius and his enemies, in his long letter to Alexander and Arius,<sup>9</sup> we see what a busy Emperor could think of one of the most devastating differences that ever tore a controversy-ridden Church.

For including here so many letters from the Saints and Fathers, no apology is needed. From Cicero to Sidonius we see a strangely homogeneous world; for over four centuries a single form of culture held undisputed sway over most of Europe and part of Asia and North Africa. This common tradition which dominated men's minds from Syria to Bordeaux, from Alexandria to York, was a powerful instrument in holding together an empire which depended as much on its intellectual outlook as on its armies. It was not only the empire's military prestige which made barbarians proud of membership within it. And this cultural

<sup>1</sup> CLXXIX.<sup>4</sup> CLXXXIII.<sup>7</sup> CXCVIII.<sup>2</sup> CLXXVIII.<sup>5</sup> CLXXXIX.<sup>8</sup> CXVIII.<sup>3</sup> CLXIX, CLXX, CLXXI.<sup>6</sup> CLVII.<sup>9</sup> CX.

framework, complete and ready to hand, the Christian Church had the incalculable good fortune to inherit. The Fathers were all bred in the same tradition, in the same devotion to the classic culture; they could not have thought, or have written a word, without it. Men of the most widely divergent beliefs had still a common ground on which to meet. Saint Ambrose and the pagan Prefect Symmachus defended different religions; but their mental equipment was the same, and they could retain, in spite of their divergences, the friendly relationship of two distinguished and cultivated minds.

From the sophistic bickerings and controversies which occupied the eastern Church in the fourth and fifth centuries it is a relief to turn to Gaul, where something of the true Latin culture, even allied to Christianity, could linger still. Gaul in these centuries was admittedly Christian, but life and letters, in the well-to-do classes, still followed the old literary models and traditions. The classic authors were devotedly studied and imitated, people tried to live and write like Pliny the Younger, while the barbarian invaders were gathering around them like a rising tide. Sidonius' letters show us a leisured, cultured life in elaborate villas<sup>1</sup> and costly châteaux, where time was spent in conversation, reading, writing, visiting, bathing, eating and sport—there was some praying and hymn-singing, at certain seasons, and to a greater extent among the ladies. But people clung to the vestiges of Roman culture with a fervour which has an air almost of desperation, so certain was it that that age of letters was over and done.

In the events of Sidonius' own life so much of the experience of that time is epitomised. He was born to wealth, educated at the university of Lyons, and married to the daughter of Avitus, who had large estates in Auvergne. He was Prefect of Rome, President of the Senate, and from these offices retired to his home in Gaul, to write and enjoy his leisure. In advanced age, with no previous ecclesiastical rank, he found himself bishop of Clermont, a devoted father of his flock, whom he led and sustained through a long and cruel siege by the Visigothic invaders. After all his courage and endurance, Auvergne was sold by Rome to Euric:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See cxciv.

<sup>2</sup> See No. cci.

he died a Visigothic subject, and his bones rested in soil that was no longer Roman. With the Visigoths ruling most of Spain, and all France from the Atlantic to the Rhone, and with the Franks on the Loire, the stage is set for the Middle Ages to begin. The letters end with Patrick's violent protest to Coroticus, king of a part of North-western Britain, or the Lowlands, who had carried off Christian proselytes from Ireland in a raid. The letter strikes a strange and different note; its strident, almost savage, music transports us to a new and alien atmosphere. With Patrick's fierce outcry on behalf of a people who were his by adoption and not by race, storms which lasted far longer than the Middle Ages, the Wrongs of Ireland, seem already to have begun.

## NOTE

AN arrangement which is, in the main, chronological has been found the most satisfactory for these letters, but has not been pedantically observed. Within reasonable chronological limits, letters that go well together have been juxtaposed at the expense of correct sequence. Thus the book begins with a little group of intimate and domestic letters of peculiar interest, while the "*medizing*" letters of Pausanias and Themistocles have been grouped with the more formal letters that follow. Similarly one letter of Athanasius (CXII.) will be found with letters on the Arian controversy in Section 9, while the other (CXLIX) is in Section II: and some of Basil's letters, those to Libanius, are placed with Libanius' letters in Section 9, other selections from his work being placed in the letters of the Saints. It was hardly suitable to place Libanius among the Saints, or to separate Basil wholly from them. The papyrus letters are in four sections, each covering a period which corresponds, roughly, to that of the section before. Footnotes have been avoided as far as possible, and no dates of authorship appear in the text. A biographical index, with dates and a few facts, is found at the end of the book.

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Permission to use translations of papyrus letters in the volumes



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*Private Letters*  
*Pagan and Christian*



# I

## EARLY GREEK LETTERS

### I. *The earliest existing Greek letter. (Translated by A. E. Zimmern.)*

Carry to the Potter's Market, and deliver to Nausias or Thrasycles or my son.

Mnesiergus sends his love to all at home and hopes this may find them well as it leaves him.

Please send me a rug, either a sheepskin or a goatskin, as cheap as you can get it, and not with the hairs on, and some strong shoe-soles; I will pay some time.

### II. *An early domestic letter.*

From Artikon, greetings to everyone at home.

If Myllion turns you out of the house, the slave who carries this letter should take the whole amount of wool to Atakes' room, provided he permits. If not, then to Agatharchus, to the room let to him by Kerdon.

### III. *Plato, the philosopher, to Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse.*<sup>1</sup> (Translated by L. A. Post.)

Prosperity and righteousness to you,—let this be my introduction and at the same time a token that this letter is from me. Once, when you were entertaining the young men of Locri, you occupied a couch a long way from mine. You then rose, and came to me with excellent words of greeting, at least I thought them

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated.

so, as did also my neighbour at table, who thereupon (for he was one of the cultured circle) put this question: "I suppose, Dionysius, Plato is a great help to you in your studies?" You replied, "In much else too, for from the moment that I sent for him, the very fact that I had done so was at once helpful to me". Here then is something that we must preserve. We must take pains to become more and more helpful to one another. So I am now doing my part towards this by sending you herewith some Pythagorean treatises and some classifications. I am also sending you a man, as we agreed at the time, who may perhaps be useful to you and Archytas—that is if Archytas has come to Syracuse. His name is Helicon, he is a native of Cyzicus, a pupil of Eudoxus and well versed in all his teaching. He has also studied under a pupil of Isocrates and under Polyxenus, an associate of Bryson. With all this he has the quality, rarely combined, of possessing social charm, and he seems good-natured. In fact he would impress one as being full of fun and good-nature. I say this, however, with misgivings; because I am expressing an opinion about a human being, and man, though not a mean animal, is a changeable one, with a very few exceptions in a few things.

As for what you wrote to me to send you, I have had the statue of Apollo done, and Leptines is bringing it. It is the work of an excellent young craftsman called Leochares. He had in his workshop another work which I thought very fine, so I bought it as a present for your wife, because her care of me both in health and in sickness did honour both to you and to me. Give it to her then, unless you decide otherwise. I am also sending twelve jars of sweet wine for the children, and two of honey. We arrived too late to store up figs, and the myrtle berries that were put in store spoiled. Another time we will take better care. Leptines will tell you about the plants.

The money for these purposes, that is to buy these articles and to pay some taxes due to the city, I took from Leptines, giving him an explanation that I thought as creditable to me as any, and one that I could give without falsehood, namely, that it was my money that I spent on the Leucadian ship amounting to about sixteen minas. This sum I took then and used for my own purposes, and for the things I have sent you.

In the next place I want you to know what your financial position is with respect to your credit at Athens, and to my claims. I will use your money, as I told you once, just as I use that of my other friends. I use just as little as I can, only the amount that I consider necessary or fair or creditable to myself and to the man whose money I am taking.

Well, my present circumstances are as follows. There are four daughters living of those nieces of mine, on the occasion of whose death I refused to wear a mourning wreath, though you urged me to. One of them is of an age to marry, one eight years old, one a little more than three years, and one not yet a year old. Dowries must be provided by me and my friends for any of these that I may live to see married. Those I don't live to see married may look to themselves; and those whose fathers become richer than I, I need not provide for. At present I am in easier circumstances than any of them, and it was I who provided their mothers with dowries, aided, among others, by Dion. Now the eldest of these is going to marry Speusippus, since she is his sister's daughter, and I need no more than thirty minas for her, since that is a fair dowry here. Further, if my mother dies, I need no more than ten minas for her tomb. In these matters my requirements for the present are about what I have mentioned. If, however, any other expense arises, either private or public, I must struggle to make it as little as possible, and what I can't avoid, you must pay.

Next I have to say in regard to the expenditure of sums from your account in Athens, first, that if I have to spend money equipping a chorus or anything of the kind, you have not, as we supposed, anyone connected with you here who will advance it: and secondly, that when, as may happen, important interests of yours are at stake, the situation can be more than inconvenient, it can be humiliating even, when prompt payment is desirable, and when a delay, to enable someone to bring the money from you, may be disastrous. Really this is a matter that I have proved myself. I sent Erastus to Andromedes the Aeginetan, on whom, as a connexion of yours, you said I could draw for whatever I needed, for I wanted to send you some other rather important things you wrote for. He however answered, as was reasonable and natural, that when he had on a former occasion paid out

money on your father's account, he had had difficulty in getting it back, and that this time he would pay a small sum and no more. So I took the money from Leptines. He, moreover, deserves praise for his conduct, not because he paid the money, but because he paid it cheerfully. In other cases, too, where he said or did anything that concerned you, he showed clearly that he was a friend, and what kind of a friend he was. Surely I ought to report such conduct as this, or the reverse, giving you in each case my opinion of anyone's behaviour in regard to you.

To Cratinus, who is a brother of Timotheus, and a companion of mine, let us give a breastplate for military service, one of the padded ones for the infantry; and to the daughters of Cebes three eleven-foot robes, not the expensive ones from Amorgus, but linen ones from Sicily.

Farewell; lead the philosophic life, and encourage the younger men. Give my greetings to the group who play ball with you, and give orders to Aristocritus and the others, in case any work or letter of mine comes to you, to see that you know of it without delay, and to keep reminding you to pay attention to the injunctions I send you in my letters. Now in particular don't forget to reimburse Leptines for his advance. Pay him at once, that others may see your treatment of him and be the more ready to accommodate us.

Iatrocles, whom I set free at that time along with Myronides, is to sail now with the things I am sending. Give him then some salaried post, and if you choose, make use of him. Preserve this letter, or keep a memorandum of it, and be always the same.

iv. *Epicurus, the philosopher, to a child. (Translated by Cyril Bailey.)*

We have arrived at Lampsacus safe and sound, Pythocles and Hermarchus and Ctesippus and I, and there we found Themista and our other friends all well. I hope you too are well, and your mamma, and that you are always obedient to papa and Matro, as you used to be. Let me tell you that the reason that I and all the rest of us love you, is that you are always obedient to them.

v. *Epicurus to Themista, wife of Leonteus of Lampsacus. (Translated by Cyril Bailey.)*

If you two don't come to me, I am capable of arriving with a hop, skip and a jump, wherever you and Themista summon me.

vi. *Epicurus, on his death-bed, to Idomeneus. (Translated by Cyril Bailey.)*

On this blissful day, which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. My continual sufferings from strangury and dysentery are so great that nothing could augment them; but over against them all I set gladness of mind at the remembrance of our past conversations. But I would have you, as becomes your lifelong attitude to me and to philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus.

vii. *Pausanias, the Spartan General, to Xerxes.*

I, Pausanias, chief of the Spartans, desiring to do you pleasure, send these prisoners taken with the sword, and I propose, if it please you also, to marry your daughter, and to make Sparta and the rest of Greece your subjects. I believe I can achieve these things with the assistance of your counsel. And if these projects meet with your approval, send some trusty servant to the sea-coast, through whom we may confer in the future.

viii. *Themistocles to Artaxerxes.*

I, Themistocles, have come to you, who of all the Greeks have wrought most mischief to your house throughout the time that your father strove against me, and I was compelled to defend myself. Far greater, on the other hand, was the good I did when he was in retreat, and I in safety. And there is a kindness owed me,<sup>1</sup> and now here am I, cast out by the Greeks through my friendship with you, with power greatly to benefit you. I propose, however, to let the space of one year elapse, and then to make plain to you myself the purpose for which I have come.

<sup>1</sup> "Here he referred to the timely warning to retreat which he gave at Salamis, and the failure of the Greek fleet to destroy the bridges—which he falsely credited to himself."—*Thucydides*.



IX. *Philip of Macedon to Aristotle, the philosopher.*

Philip to Aristotle: greeting.

Know that a son is born to me. For this indeed I thank the gods, not so much for that he is born, as that he has the good fortune to be born in your lifetime. For I hope that under your training and guidance he will prove worthy of us and of the succession to our realm.

X. *Philip, King of Macedon, to the Athenians, having marched suddenly upon Thermopylae and Phocis while the Athenian envoys were in Macedon arranging peace.*

Philip, King of Macedon, to the Senate and people of Athens, greeting:

Be it known to you that we have entered Thermopylae, and reduced Phocis to submission. In those towns which have voluntarily surrendered we have placed garrisons: those which held out we have taken by force and razed to the ground, leading the inhabitants captive. But hearing that you were preparing to succour them, I have written you these presents, to the end that you may give yourselves no further trouble in this matter. For, in fine, you do not appear to me to be acting reasonably, in taking the field against me, after concluding a peace, especially as the Phocians were in no way comprehended in the treaty between us. If, therefore, you do not abide by your engagements, you will be beforehand with me only in the matter of being the first to commit the injury.

XI. *Isocrates to Alexander the Great.*

I thought that I should be doing a curious thing if when you are with your father I were to write to him without sending you any message, or greeting you, or writing you a single word to show my readers that old age has not dimmed my wits nor scattered my senses, and that such as still remain to me are not unworthy of the talent which adorned my younger days.

I hear it said on all hands that you are a friend of humanity, of the Athenians, and of philosophy—not unreasonably, but with

moderation; and that of the citizens of our town you receive not such as are heedless of their own good, and busy to no good end, but men whose society cannot harm you, whose company and communications can neither injure you nor corrupt—men, in fact, whose society it is wise to frequent. In philosophy you do not reject the controversial, regarding it as useful in the intercourse of private persons, but unsuitable to those who have to lead the multitude, and to absolute rulers. For it is neither right nor useful that those of superior mental capacity should argue with their fellow citizens, or permit others to contradict them. Amusement of this kind does not please you, for you prefer instruction in the kind of converse which is of use for the conduct of everyday business, and for considering affairs of state. Thus you have acquired the faculty of estimating correctly what is likely to occur, and of exercising good sense in commanding those who must obey you. You have an exact discrimination between righteous men and the reverse, and can reward or punish each according to his desert.

Such is the study which now wisely preoccupies you, and in your father and in others you inspire the hope that you will abide by these principles, and like your father, outstrip all men in wisdom.

XII. *Alexander the Great to Aristotle, the philosopher, his tutor.*

Alexander to Aristotle, greeting.

You should not have published your lectures, as you have done, for how am I to outstrip other men if the doctrines in which I have been trained are made public to everybody? However, I had rather excel in knowledge of the best things, than in mere accomplishments. Farewell.

XIII. *Alexander the Great to Leonidas, his tutor, who had once rebuked him for extravagance in sacrificing, together with a gift of spices from the spoils of Gaza. A fragment.*

I have sent you myrrh and frankincense in abundance, so that you may cease being stingy with the gods.

- xiv. *Olympias to her son Alexander the Great, who had claimed that Zeus was his father.*

My dear son,

I must entreat you to be quiet, and not to cast aspersions on me, or bring accusations against me before Hera. She will certainly bring some great calamity upon me if you suggest in your letters that I have been her husband's mistress.

- xv. *Alexander the Great to Dareius, who had demanded the return of his mother, his wife and his children, captured after the battle of Issus.*

Your forefathers came to Macedonia and to the rest of Greece and did us injury without any provocation on our part. I, therefore, the chosen leader of the Greeks, desiring to be revenged upon the Persians, have crossed into Asia; but it was you who initiated hostilities. For you sent aid to the Perinthians, who were wronging my father, and Ochus<sup>1</sup> sent a force into Thrace, which is under our rule. By conspirators set on by you my father was slain; of this you have boasted in all your letters. Arses<sup>2</sup> you slew, and then Bagoas;<sup>3</sup> the throne you seized contrary to Persian law, and to all laws. Your Persian subjects you have ruled without equity; to the Greeks you have sent letters of ill intent about me, to stir them up to war against me; to the Lacedaemonians you sent money, and to certain other of the Greek states, but none would accept it, save only the Lacedaemonians. Your emissaries destroyed my friends, and were striving to dissolve the league which I had formed among the Greeks; so I have taken the field against you in a quarrel which is of your own seeking. In a previous battle I overthrew your commanders and your emirs; now, by the gift of the gods, yourself, your forces and your empire are in my hand. Such of your soldiers as were not killed in battle, and fled to me for refuge, I am protecting. Not under compulsion, but of their own free will they came to me, and as volunteers they are serving in my army.

<sup>1</sup> A predecessor of Dareius.

<sup>2</sup> A son of Ochus.

<sup>3</sup> A palace eunuch who had murdered Ochus.

Thus I am Lord of all Asia. Come to me then, and if you are afraid, lest if you come you may receive some hurt at my hands, send some of your friends to obtain pledges of safety from me. Come to me and ask me for your mother, your wife, your children, or whatever else you desire; ask and you shall receive. Whatever you desire shall be granted to you.

But for the future, whenever you send to me, send as to the Lord of Asia. Do not address your wishes to me as an equal; if there is aught that you desire, crave it as from the lord of all your lands. Otherwise I shall consider you an offender, and if you dispute my right to your kingdom, stand, and fight another battle for it. Do not run away. For wherever you are I shall take the field against you.

xvi. *Calanus, an Indian philosopher, to Alexander the Great.*

Your friends, whose dreams even have not revealed to them our works, persuade you to lay hands and violence upon the Indian philosophers. Our bodies you may indeed remove from place to place, but our souls you will never compel to that which they do not will, any more than you can compel wood and stone to utter sounds. Fire burns fierce pain into living bodies, and destroys them; on this fire we are, for we are ever burning alive. There is neither king nor prince who can compel us to do what we have not chosen. Nor do we resemble the philosophers of Greece, who are busy with mere words, for the sake of publicity. With us words are the companions of deeds, they are brief, they have a different purpose, and bring us happiness and freedom.



## II

### EARLY IMAGINARY LETTERS

xvii. *Periander, Tyrant of Corinth, to Procles, his father-in-law.*

I murdered my wife by mistake. You, however, have deliberately made mischief by setting my son against me. So put a stop to my son's ill-humour, or I will take revenge upon you. For long ago I made personal amends for your daughter's death by burning the clothes of all the women of Corinth on her pyre.

xviii. *Amasis, King of Egypt, to Polycrates, Tyrant of Samos, for whom on account of his exceptional good fortune he feared the envy of the gods.*

Amasis to Polycrates thus: It is sweet to hear of the prosperity of an ally and friend, but convinced as I am of the envy of the gods, I feel but little reassured by your great good fortune. Fain would I that both myself and those I love should be at one time exalted by prosperity, at another brought low by disappointment, and thus have life chequered by the alternation of success and failure, rather than prosper uniformly on every occasion. For never have I heard of an individual constantly successful that did not come to a most miserable end. Listen then to the advice I now offer you: apply this palliative to your good fortune. Consider well, and decide on something that you hold to be of the greatest worth, the loss of which would most bitterly distress you. Cast it away from you, so that it may no more be seen of man. And if after this, good fortune and bad do not in turn befall you, have recourse to the remedy I have proposed.

xix. *Solon of Athens to Pisistratus.*

I am quite ready to believe that you will not harm me. For before you were tyrant I was your friend, and now I have no difference with you beyond that of every Athenian who dislikes

tyranny. Whether it is better for them to be ruled by one man, or to be a democracy, everyone must decide for himself. I am prepared to say that you are the best of tyrants. But I do not think it would be correct for me to return to Athens. For it was I who gave equal citizenship to the Athenians, and refused to become tyrant when I might. Should I not then be blamed if by returning I set the seal of my approval on your proceedings?

xx. *Solon of Athens to Croesus, Tyrant of Sardes.*

I admire you for your friendliness towards me, and by Athena, if it were not everything to me to live in a democracy, I would much rather have consented to settle down in your palace, than at Athens, under the forcible tyranny of Pisistratus. But it is sweeter to me to live where all have equality of rights. However, I will pay you a visit, for I am anxious to make your acquaintance.

xxi. *Cleobulus to Solon of Athens, advising him as to a refuge in his exile.*

You have many friends, and there is a home for you everywhere; but the most suitable for Solon, say I, will be Lindus, for Lindus is a democracy. Moreover it is in a sea-girt isle, and no one who lives there can be tormented by Pisistratus. And your friends will come to see you from all parts.

xxii. *Anaximenes, a philosopher of Miletus, to Pythagoras, on the death of Thales.*

Thales, son of Examyas, has met with an ill-starred end in his old age. As was his custom, he went out one night, attended by a maidservant, to look at the stars. With his eyes uplifted, not looking where he was going, he came to the edge of a steep place, and fell down. Such is the end of the astronomer of the Milesians. Let us who were his pupils preserve his memory, and our children also, and our pupils. Let us ever speak to one another in his words, let all our discourse begin with Thales.



### III

#### LETTERS FROM HELLENISTIC EGYPT

XXIII. *A petition from a scalded lady.*

To King Ptolemy, from Philista, daughter of Lysias, of the women settled at Tricomia, greeting. I have been grossly wronged by Petechon. As I was bathing in the baths in the aforesaid village on Tybi 7th<sup>1</sup> of the first year of your reign, he was acting as pourer in the women's bath, and when I had come out in order to anoint myself, he took the dippers full of hot water and threw them over me, and burnt my belly and my left thigh right down to the knee, so that my life is endangered. When I became aware of this I gave him in charge to Nechthosiris, chief of police of the village, in the presence of Simon, the mayor. So I beseech your Majesty, if it please you, not to despise the plaint of a poor woman who earns her bread with her hands, but to instruct Diophanes, the military commander, to write to Simon, the mayor, and to Nechthosiris, the chief of police, to bring Petechon up before him, so that he may conduct an inquiry, and I, a humble suppliant before your Majesty, the common Benefactor of us all, may receive redress for my wrongs.

XXIV. *Demetrius of Phalerum, Librarian to King Ptolemy Philadelphus, on the revision and completion of the Library of Alexandria. (Translated by W. Whiston, revised.)*<sup>2</sup>

Demetrius to the Great King:

When, O King, your majesty gave me a charge concerning the collection of books that were wanting, to fill your library, and concerning the care that ought to be taken about such as are imperfect, I used the utmost diligence in the matter. And I have

<sup>1</sup> About Jan. 2nd.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly not genuine.

to inform you that we want the books of the Jewish legislation, and some others beside; for they are written in the Hebrew characters, and being in the language of that nation, are unknown to us. It has also happened that they have been transcribed more carelessly than they should have been, because hitherto they have not had Royal care taken about them. Now it is necessary for you to have accurate copies of them. For this legislation is entirely full of hidden wisdom and entirely blameless, as being the legislation of God: for which cause, as Hecataeus of Abdera says, the poets and historians make no mention of it, nor of those men who lead their lives according to it, since it is a holy law, and ought not to be published by profane mouths. If, then, it please your majesty, you may write to the high priest of the Jews, to send six of the elders out of every tribe, and such as are most skilled in the laws, that by their means we may learn the clear and agreeing sense of these books, and may obtain an accurate interpretation of their contents, and so may have such a collection of them as may be in accordance with your desire.

xxv. *Demophon to Ptolemaeus,<sup>1</sup> requesting him to send musicians and various other accessories for a festival. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Demophon to Ptolemaeus, greeting. Make every effort to send me the flute-player Petous with both the Phrygian flutes and the rest, and if any expense is necessary, pay it, and you shall recover it from me. Send me also Zenobius, the effeminate, with a drum and cymbals and castanets, for he is wanted by the women for the sacrifice; and let him wear as fine clothes as possible. Get the kid also from Aristion and send it me; and if you have arrested the slave, deliver him to Semphtheus to bring to me. Send me as many cheeses as you can, a new jar, vegetables of all kinds, and some delicacies if you have any. Good-bye. Put them on board with the guards who will assist in bringing the boat.

To Ptolemaeus.

<sup>1</sup> A private person, not one of the kings of the name.

XXVI. *To an errant husband, who had been performing a retreat at the temple of Serapis. (Translated by G. Milligan.)*

Isias to Hephaestion her brother,<sup>1</sup> greeting. If you are well, and things in general are going right, it is as I am continually praying the gods. I myself am in good health, and the child, and all at home; we talk of you continually. When I got your letter from Horus, in which you explained that you were in retreat at the Serapeum at Memphis, I immediately gave thanks to the gods that you were well, but that you did not return when all those who were in retreat with you returned, distresses me. For having piloted myself and your child out of such a crisis, and come to the last extremity because of the high price of corn, I thought that now at last on your return I should obtain some relief. But you have never even thought of returning, nor spared a look for our helpless state. While you were still at home, I went short altogether, not to mention how long a time has passed since then, and such disasters befallen, and you having sent us nothing. And now that Horus who brought the letter has told me that you have been released from your retreat, I am utterly distressed. Nor is this all, but since your mother is in great trouble about it, I entreat you for her sake and for ours to return to the city, unless indeed something most pressing occupies you. Pray take care of yourself that you may be in health. Good-bye.

To Hephaestion.

Year 2 Epeiph 30.<sup>2</sup>

XXVII. *On feeding the sacred Crocodiles. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt and J. G. Smyly.)*

From Petenephes, greeting and good health. The keepers of the crocodiles from whom you took security for the payment of 2 artabae of wheat each, have never made the payment. Please therefore to release them and return the articles pledged, in order that they may be able without hindrance to furnish the supplies of food to the sacred animals. Good-bye.

<sup>1</sup> Almost certainly also her husband.

<sup>2</sup> B.C. 168. About July 23rd.

XXVIII. *Concerning the entertainment of a distinguished Roman tourist in Egypt.* (Translated by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt and J. G. Smyly.)

Hermias to Horus, greeting. Appended is a copy of the letter to Asclepiades. Take care that its instructions are carried out. Good-bye.

The 5th year, Xandicus 17, Mecheir 17th.<sup>1</sup>

To Asclepiades. Lucius Memmius, a Roman Senator, who occupies a position of great dignity and honour, is making the voyage from Alexandria to the district of Arsinoe to see the sights. Let him be received with special magnificence, and take care that at the proper spots apartments be prepared, and the landing-places to them be got ready, and that the gifts of hospitality written below be presented to him at the landing-place, and that the furniture of the apartment, the customary titbits for Petesuchus<sup>2</sup> and the crocodiles, the necessities for viewing the labyrinth, and the offerings and sacrifices be provided; in general take the greatest pains in everything that the visitor may be satisfied, and display the utmost zeal.

<sup>1</sup> B.C. 112, Feb. 12th.

<sup>2</sup> The crocodile god of Lake Moeris.

#### IV

### LETTERS FROM THE ROMAN REPUBLIC AND EARLY EMPIRE

#### XXIX. *Julius Caesar to Oppius and Cornelius.*

On the 9th of March I reached Brundisium. I have pitched my camp once more under the walls. Pompey is at Brundisium. He sent Numorius Magnus to me to negotiate for peace.<sup>1</sup> I answered as I thought right. I wished you to know this at once. As soon as I see any prospect of success in coming to terms, I will at once inform you.

#### XXX. *Caesar to Cicero.*

Julius Caesar, Imperator, to Cicero, greeting:

Your judgment of me is correct (for you know me well) that nothing is further from my nature than cruelty. Whilst I derive great pleasure from this fact, I am triumphant in my gratification that you approve my conduct. As for the report that those whom I allowed to go free have withdrawn, merely with the intention of renewing the war against me, I am not in the least concerned. I desire nothing better than that I should be true to myself, and they to themselves. For yourself, I should be obliged if you will meet me at the city, to the end that in all my affairs I may continue to avail myself of your counsels and your resources. You must know that nothing gives me greater pleasure than the company of your son-in-law Dolabella; I shall be indebted to him for his support in this request, for he cannot do otherwise than gratify me, such is his kindness and goodwill towards me.

<sup>1</sup> In his Commentaries Caesar represents these overtures as coming from himself.

XXXI. *Gossip of the town. M. Caelius Rufus to Cicero in Cilicia, sending him news from Rome.*

I have no idea how soon you mean to leave your province. As far as I am concerned, so long as you remain there, the very success which has hitherto attended your operations makes me the more terrified of the prospect of a Parthian War, for fear that some alarm might dispel my habitual merriment. I have had to produce this letter on the spur of the moment, for the messenger of the *publicani* was in a hurry, which accounts for its brevity. I had already given a longer one to your freedman yesterday. Besides, absolutely nothing new has happened, unless you would like me to retail to you gossip of this kind (and I am sure you would): Young Cornificius has got engaged to Orestilla's daughter, Paulla Valeria; Triarius' sister got a divorce without any cause alleged, the very day her husband was expected home from his province. She is going to marry D. Brutus. She has sent back all her clothes. Plenty of things of this kind, past belief, have happened since you went away.

Servius Ocella would never have got the credit of amusing himself with other people's wives, if he hadn't been caught red-handed twice in three days. You will ask, where? In the last place, upon my word, that I should have wished! I leave you to find out the rest from others. And I rather fancy the idea of a field-marshal going round asking one person after another who is the lady so-and-so has been caught with!

XXXII. *About a bath. Cicero to Terentia.*

VENUSIA, Oct. 1.

I think I shall reach Tusculum on the 7th or 8th. Have everything ready there, for I may perhaps have several others with me, and we shall stay some time I think. If there is no tub in the bath-house, have one put in, and so with everything necessary for health and comfort.

XXXIII. *An unfortunate purchase. Cicero to M. Fadius Gallus, who had purchased on his behalf statues that he did not want, and had paid too much for them.*<sup>1</sup>

ROME, *May*.

I was but just come from Arpinum when your letter was brought me. By the same bearer I had a letter from Avianius<sup>2</sup> which conveyed this most generous offer, namely, that when he is here he will date my debt to him on whatever day is most convenient to me. So fancy yourself in my place; does it become your modesty or mine first to ask a favour regarding the day, and second, to plead for more than a year's grace? My dear Gallus, there would have been no difficulty if you had bought the things I wanted and had gone no higher than the price I named. However, I will not only stand by the purchases you say in your letter you have made, but I am grateful to you none the less, for I fully understand that it was with eagerness and affection that you bought things which pleased yourself—and I have always counted you a person of most fastidious taste—in the conviction that they were worthy of me. Still, I hope Damasippus<sup>3</sup> will stand by his offer, for I do not really want a single one of these purchases. Not being quite conversant with my habits, you have bought me four or five statues at a price at which I do not value the entire sculptural species. You compare the *Maenads* you have bought with Metellus' *Muses*. What likeness can there be? To begin with, I should never have thought even *Muses* worth all that money, and I think the *Nine* themselves would approve my opinion. *Muses* at any rate would have been appropriate to a library, and in keeping with my occupations. But where have I a place to put *Maenads*? They are charming, you will say. I know them well enough, for I have often seen them. Statues so well known to me I would have given you specific authority to buy, if I had decided on them. The statues I am in the habit of buying are of the sort suitable to adorn a *palaestra*, after the fashion of a gymnasium. And what, again, shall I, a promoter of peace, do with a statue of Mars? I am glad there was not a figure of Saturn also; for I should have expected the two of them to bring me into

<sup>1</sup> Slightly abbreviated.

<sup>2</sup> An art-dealer.

<sup>3</sup> A well-known connoisseur and collector.



debt! I should have preferred a statue of Mercury, for I could then, I suppose, have struck a better bargain with Avianius. You can keep the table-stand which you say you intended for yourself, if you like it, but if you have changed your mind I will of course have it. Yet with the money you have spent, I had rather have purchased a small house at Tarracina to use as a halting-place, so as not to be always a burden on my friends there. I see it has all been my freedman's fault, though I gave him clear instructions to purchase certain specified things, and Junius is also to blame, who, I think you know, is a close friend of Avianius.

I have constructed some new alcoves with seats in the small portico at my place at Tusculum. I should like to decorate them with pictures, for my taste in that direction runs to painting rather than to statuary. However if I am to take your purchases, please let me know where they are, when they are to be fetched, and what sort of vehicle should be sent for them. For if Damasippus doesn't stick to his decision I must find a Damasippus-substitute, even at a loss to myself. . . .

xxxiv. *Cicero to M. Caelius Rufus, begging him to defend a friend in a law-suit.*

From LAODICEA, February.

M. Fadius, a most excellent man and accomplished scholar, is a great friend of mine, to whom I am extraordinarily attached, both for his remarkable gifts and exceptional learning, and also for the singular modesty of his manners. Be so kind as to take up his case as if it were my own. I know you great lawyers: one must commit a murder if one wishes for the benefit of your services, but in this man's case I will accept no excuse. If you value me you will abandon everything else when Fadius needs your assistance. I am eagerly waiting and longing for news from Rome, and before all things want to know how you are, for owing to the severity of the winter it is a long time since any news reached us.

xxxv. *Cicero to Atticus, asking for help in his Library: from Antium.*

It will be delightful if you come here. You will find Tyrannio's arrangement of my books wonderfully good: their

remains are better than I expected. Still I wish you would send me two of your library-slaves for Tyrannio to use as gluers and to help him in other ways, and tell them to get some good parchment for making wrappers, which I think you Greeks call "*sillybi*". But all this only if convenient to yourself. In any case be sure to come yourself if you can possibly endure to be stuck in a place like this, and Pilia<sup>1</sup> too, for that is only right, and Tullia longs to have her. My word, that is a fine troupe you have acquired. I hear your gladiators fight superbly. If you had cared to hire them out you could have cleared your expenses by the last two spectacles. But more of this later. Be sure to come, and if you love me don't forget about the library-slaves.

xxxvi. *A Dinner Party. Cicero to Papirius Paetus at Naples.*

I am scribbling a draft of this letter to you in my pocket-book on lying down to dinner at three o'clock.<sup>2</sup> Where?—I fancy you ask. With Volumnius Eutrapelus. Above me is Atticus, below me Verrius, both friends of yours. Are you surprised that our slavery is so merry?<sup>3</sup> Well, what am I to do? I ask your advice, as the pupil of a philosopher. Am I to be unhappy, to make myself miserable? What do I gain by that? And for what purpose? You advise me to give myself up to books. What else do you imagine I do? Could I live at all, were it not for my books? But even then one can have, I won't say enough, but more than enough. When I have left them, though dinner interests me very little—you remember the one problem you put to the philosopher Dion—I cannot find anything better to do with my time before going to bed.

Now hear some more. Below Eutrapelus is Cytheris.<sup>4</sup> "And is this the sort of party Cicero goes to", you will ask, "—that famous Cicero,

whom all revered, whom even Greeks admired?"

<sup>1</sup> Atticus' wife.

<sup>2</sup> To be copied by a secretary for dispatch.

<sup>3</sup> Caesar was in power and Cicero and his friends in retirement.

<sup>4</sup> Cytheris was her stage name. Antony carried her about with him in his tour of the Italian cities in 46, before he had divorced his first wife. Her relations with Volumnius later were so notorious that she was called Volumnia.

I must assure you, I had no idea she would be here. But after all, even the Socratic Aristippus did not blush when he was accused of having Laïs for his mistress. "Yes, it's true," he would say, "but I possess Laïs, not she me." It is better in Greek; if you want a better translation you can make it yourself. As for me, that sort of thing never attracted me as a young man, still less so now I am an old one. I like a dinner party. I talk about any topic that comes on the *tapis*, as the phrase goes, and my grief and sighs are turned into shouts of laughter. Was your behaviour any better when you made fun of a philosopher who had invited anyone who liked to ask him what he wanted to know? You said that what you wanted to know every morning was where you were going to dine that day.

The simple fellow thought you were going to ask him whether heaven is one or infinite in number. What was that to you? Well, you will say to me, in the name of wonder, what is a dinner that you must take it *there*, of all places?

So this is the way I spend my time: I read or write something every day. Then lest I be denying friendship its due, I dine with my friends, not only without overstepping the law,—if indeed one can say that law still exists,—but even within it, and that by a long way.<sup>1</sup> So you have no reason to fear my arrival; you will receive a guest of modest appetite, but with an infinite capacity for fun.

xxxvii. *The consolations of cookery. Cicero to Papirius Paetus at Naples, on the occupations of his retirement during the supremacy of Caesar.*

Your letter gave me a twofold pleasure: first because it made me laugh, second because it showed me that you could still laugh too. Nor did I mind in the least being the butt of your raillery, being pelted with your chestnuts, like a jester at table who has let his tongue run away with him. What does vex me is not to have managed to come over to your place as I intended. You

<sup>1</sup> Caesar had passed a sumptuary law affecting food, which was strictly enforced, even to having prohibited comestibles snatched by the lictors from shop counters and dinner tables.

would have received no mere guest, a messmate rather. And such a hero! Not the man you used to reduce to repletion by the *hors-d'œuvres*. I now reach the omelette with an appetite unimpaired, and so the good work continues right up to the roast veal. Those compliments you used to pay me once upon a time are over and done with. "What an easily satisfied person!" "What a simple guest!" These are all at an end. I have given up all my anxiety about the Republic, all meditation of speeches to be delivered before the Senate, all preparation of briefs. I have gone over to my old enemy Epicurus, not of course with the vulgar extravagance of modern times, but with that elegant refinement of yours,—I mean your former style, in the days when you had something to spend (though as a matter of fact you were never better off). So be ready. You have to deal with a man who is not only voracious, but a gourmet. Your neophyte always runs to extremes, you know. You must forget all your dainty fruit baskets, and *mehlspeise*. I am growing such a connoisseur that I frequently dare to invite your friends Verrius and Camillus to dinner. What *viveurs*! How fastidious! But hark to my audacity: I even gave Hirtius a dinner, but without a peacock however. In that dinner my cook could not imitate anything of his except the hot sauce.

So this is my present way of life. In the morning I receive visits from a large number of our own side, who are depressed, and also some of our conquerors, who are cheery enough, and as regards myself are most effusive, and gushingly amiable. When the stream of morning callers has subsided, I wrap myself up in my books and either write or read. There are also many visitors who listen to my discourses under the impression that I am a very learned man, because I am just a trifle less ignorant than they. After that all my time is given up to my physical welfare. I have mourned my country more profoundly, and for longer, than any mother for her only son. But if you love me, take care of yourself, lest if you are laid up I descend upon you and eat you out of house and home. For I am resolved to show you no mercy even if you are ill.

XXXVIII. *Thoughts of a second marriage. Cicero to Atticus: on several matters, including his opinion of certain ladies who had been introduced to him. From Tusculum.*

I am sorry to hear about Seius. But we must resign ourselves to whatever is natural to mortality. Why, what are we ourselves, and how long are we destined to retain our feelings for such things? Let me consider of what is more within my control—yet after all, not much more so—namely, what I am to do about the senate.

And, not to omit anything, Caesonius has written to me to say that Sulpicius' wife Postumia has been to call on him. As to the daughter of Pompeius Magnus, I wrote you back word that I am not thinking about her at the present moment. That other lady whom you mention I think you know, I never saw anything plainer in all my life. But I am soon to be in town. We can talk about it then.<sup>1</sup>

*P.S.*—After I had sealed my letter I received yours. I am glad to hear that Attica is so cheerful; I am sorry for the slight attack.

XXXIX. *A visit from Julius Caesar. Cicero to Atticus, describing a visit from Caesar and his retinue.*

PUTEOLI, December 21.

What an alarming guest, and yet I have no reason to regret having received him. He was quite pleasant after all. When he arrived at Philippus' house, on the second evening of the Saturnalia, the villa was so crowded with soldiers that the room intended for Caesar himself to dine in could hardly be kept clear of them. There were actually two thousand men! I was somewhat nervous as to what was to happen to me next day; so Cassius Barba came to the rescue and gave me guards. A camp was pitched out of doors for the soldiers, and the villa was made secure. Caesar stayed with Philippus till one o'clock on the third day of the Saturnalia, but admitted no one. I suppose he was making up accounts with Balbus. Then he took a walk on the beach. After

<sup>1</sup> He had divorced Terentia.

two he went to the bath. Then he heard about Mamurra without changing countenance. He was rubbed down with oil, and then took his place at table. As he was going to take an emetic later, he ate and drank without restraint and with gusto. Certainly everything was excellent and well served, and more than that

The fare was good,  
And wit and laughter seasoned well the food.

In addition, there were three rooms where his suite were most hospitably entertained. The freedmen of lower rank, and even the slaves, went short of nothing. The upper sort, of course, were more handsomely served. In fact, I made it clear that I wasn't a nobody. However, he isn't the sort of guest to whom one would say, "I should be delighted if you would look in on your way back". Once is enough. There wasn't a word of anything important between us; our conversation was solely literary. In short, he was pleased, and enjoyed himself. He said he expected to stay one day at Puteoli, another at Baiae.

Here you have the tale of the entertainment, or I might call it, the billeting, irksome, but not seriously uncomfortable. I am remaining here for a while and then move on to Tusculum.

As he was passing Dolabella's house, and nowhere else, the whole guard formed up right and left of his horse. I heard it from Nicias.

*XL. Cleopatra in Rome. Cicero to Atticus at Rome.*<sup>1</sup>

. . . I detest the Queen: let Hammonius, the voucher for her promises, vouch that I have good cause for saying so.<sup>2</sup> For all the presents she promised were things of a learned kind, and consistent with my character, such as I could proclaim on the house-tops. As for Sara,<sup>3</sup> I know him to be not only an unprincipled rascal but aggressively insolent to me. Only once have I seen him at my house, and when I asked him politely what I could do for him, he said he was looking for Atticus. And the insolence of the

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated.

<sup>2</sup> Presents from Cleopatra to Cicero had miscarried.

<sup>3</sup> Hammonius and Sara were attendants on the queen.



Queen herself when she was living in Caesar's trans-Tiberine villa, the recollection of it is painful to me. So I will have nothing to do with any of them. They think me devoid not only of spirit, but of the ordinary feelings of a human being.

My departure from Italy is delayed by Eros' business methods. From the balances he reported on April 5th I ought to be well off, whereas I am reduced to borrowing. The revenues from those properties of mine which bring something in, have, I think, been assigned for building the memorial shrine.<sup>1</sup> . . .

XLII. *The murder of Julius Caesar. Cicero to L. Minucius Basilus, congratulating him on the murder of Caesar.*<sup>2</sup>

ROME, March 15.

I congratulate you! For myself I am delighted. I love you: I am watching over your interests, I desire you to love me, and to have news of how you are, and what is being done.

XLIII. *The education of Claudius, afterwards Emperor. The Emperor Augustus to his wife Livia.*

As you desired me, my dear Livia, I have had some conversation with Tiberius on the proper procedure for your grandson Claudius<sup>3</sup> at the games of Mars. For we have both agreed that we must reach a decision as to what course we should follow with him, for if he is mentally sound, *compos mentis*, as one might say, what is there for us to hesitate about—why should we not train and bring him on by the same steps and stages as his brother? But if we see that he is deficient, or lacking in any way, whether in body or mind, we must not give a handle to a public who make a practice of ridicule and scorn, to laugh at us. We shall have no peace if we have to make up our minds on every separate occasion as it arises, without a settled policy or plan, as to whether we are going to regard him as fit for office or not. However, for the present, on the subject about which you have consulted me, I

<sup>1</sup> To his daughter Tullia.

<sup>2</sup> He had taken a peculiarly bloody part in the murder.

<sup>3</sup> His full name was Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus, Livia's grandson, son of Drusus and Antonia; he was of feeble health and wits.



have no objection to his presiding at the banquet of the priests at the games, if he is ready to be advised by Silvanus' son, his kinsman, so that he may avoid doing anything conspicuous or absurd.

I do not wish him to see the games in the circus from the Imperial box, for in such an exposed position in the auditorium he will be observed by all. Nor do I wish him to take the place of the absent consuls on the Alban Mount, or to remain at Rome during the Latin festival. For if he follows his brother in the office of the Alban Mount, what reason can we allege for not allowing him the prefecture of the city? Thus, my dear Livia, you have my opinion, and I am resolved that once for all we shall come to a decision on the whole subject, lest we waver evermore between hope and fear. You may show this part of my letter to Antonia.

XLIII. *Success at gambling. The Emperor Augustus to his stepson Tiberius.*

I have spent, my dear Tiberius, a most enjoyable festival of Minerva. I played every day, and made the gaming-board quite hot. Your brother was very noisy over a desperate run of ill-luck, but on the whole he did not lose much, for, though he lost enormously at first, he gradually made an un hoped-for recovery. I lost twenty thousand sesterces, for my part, but this was due to the extravagant generosity which I make a habit of showing at play. For if I had called in all the debts I forgave, or even merely kept what I gave away, I should have won fifty thousand. But I prefer to do thus, in order to exalt my reputation for generosity to the skies.

XLIV. *The Emperor Augustus to the poet Horace.*

Onysius brought me a little book of yours, on which I am looking kindly, as it seems to apologise for its diminutive size. I really believe you are afraid of your books being bigger than you are; but what you lack in stature you make up in girth. So you might write on a pint pot, so that your book might be as bulky as possible, like your own paunch.

XLV. *A Roman official to his superior. Claudius Lysias, legionary tribune stationed at Jerusalem, to Felix, Governor of Caesarea.*

Claudius Lysias to the most excellent Governor Felix, greeting.

This man was taken of the Jews and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

XLVI. *The Emperor Vespasian to Apollonius of Tyana.*

If all men cared to be philosophers, of your sort, Apollonius, it would be a good day for philosophy and for poverty. Philosophy would be disinterested, and poverty voluntary. Farewell.

XLVII. *Apollonius of Tyana to Vespasian.*

Nero in sport gave the Greeks their liberty: you in all seriousness have made them slaves.

XLVIII. *Apollonius of Tyana to Domitian.*

If you have power, and that you certainly have, then it would be a good thing if you also acquired some discretion. For supposing you had discretion, and had not power, then you would have been equally in need of power. For each of these stands ever in need of the other, just as light needs an eye, and an eye light.

- XLIX. *A renegade philosopher. Apollonius of Tyana to Euphrates, whose actions had not sustained the reputation of a philosopher.*

Beginning with Syria you have visited all the countries as far as Italy, parading yourself in the so-called royal cities. At that time you were wearing a philosopher's gown, and a great white beard, but besides those, nothing. How comes it, then, that you are now returning by sea with a cargo entirely composed of silver, of gold, of furnishings of all kinds, of embroidered raiment, and with all the other trappings of overweening pride, boasting and unhappiness? What cargo is this, and what the purport of these strange purchases? Zeno never bought anything but dried fruit.

- L. *The Emperor Domitian is imposed upon by a forger; to the manager of the Imperial domain in Bithynia.*

Flavius Archippus,<sup>1</sup> the philosopher, has prevailed with me to give an order that 100,000 sesterces be laid out in purchasing him an estate near Broussa, his native place, sufficient to support his family. Let this accordingly be done, and place the sum expended to the article of my benefactions.

- LI. *A moral letter. Seneca, the philosopher, to his friend Lucilius. On the value and use of time. (Translated by T. Morell.)*

This do, my Lucilius, be your own master, and such hours as have hitherto been forcibly taken from you, or filched unawares, or have slipped inadvertently by, recollect, and for the future turn to some account. You may be assured that what I say is true: part of our time is snatched from us, part is gently subtracted from us, and part slides insensibly away. But most scandalous is that loss which is owed to negligence; and yet but small attention will evince that a great part of life is spent in doing ill, a greater in doing nothing, and too often the whole wide of any purpose. Where will you find a man who sets any value upon time? Who reckons the value of a day, or understands that he is dying daily?

<sup>1</sup> Archippus had been condemned to the mines for forgery, but on various pleas, one of which was his profession, had contrived not to serve his sentence.

For herein are we deceived; we look forward at death, whereas death in a great measure is already passed; all the lapsed years of life are already in the tenure of death.

Act therefore, my Lucilius, as you inform me that you do. Embrace every hour; the stronger the hold you have upon to-day, the less will be your dependence upon to-morrow. Life, while we hesitate, still glides away. There is nothing, Lucilius, that we may call our own, but Time. All other things are foreign to us; Nature has put us in possession of this one fleeting transitory boon, which anyone deprives us of at pleasure. And so great is the folly of mortals, that when they have obtained things of the lowest value, mere trifles, at least such as are payable again, they suffer them to be set down to their account, but no one thinks himself indebted who hath borrowed Time. Yet Time is the only thing that a grateful heart cannot repay.

You will ask perhaps how I act myself, who am giving you this advice? I will confess ingenuously, as you would expect from one who is open-handed; and yet I reckon up my account. I cannot say I lose nothing, but I can tell you what I lose, and how and in what manner. I am not ashamed to own the cause of my poverty; but it happens to me, as to many who have been reduced to indigence through no fault of their own: all men are ready to excuse, but none to assist them.

What then? I can by no means think I am a poor man, who have still enough, however small a portion it be, wherewith to be content. But may you, my friend, still keep your own; and seize the opportunity to use it properly. For as our ancestors wisely judged, "It is too late to be sparing, when the vessel is almost out". As not only a little, but also the dregs of everything, remain at the bottom of the cask. Farewell.

LII. *A letter of consolation.<sup>1</sup> Plutarch to his wife on the death of their infant daughter.*

Plutarch to his wife, greetings.

The messenger you sent to tell me of the death of our little daughter must have gone astray on the way to Athens. However,

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated.

when I arrived at Tanagra I heard of it from my niece. I suppose the funeral is over by now; and I hope that it was performed in such a way as to spare you pain, both now and hereafter. And if you had any wish that you refrained from fulfilling till you could have my opinion, thinking that it would then be easier to decide, whatever it is I am sure it will be free from pomp or superstition, which are both entirely foreign to your nature.

Only, my dear, let us both bear our affliction with patience. I know, and very clearly understand, the magnitude of our loss; but if I should find you giving way to unreasonable grief, that would be more painful to me than the loss itself. And yet I am myself neither stock nor stone, as you yourself know well, through our long association together, in which we have brought up so many children, and have educated them all by ourselves at home.

This child was particularly dear to you, for she came when you were longing for a daughter after four sons: for that reason I gave her your name. And to anyone with your great love of children, this grief must have peculiar bitterness, when you consider how innocent is their joy and unalloyed by evil or wrath. Her disposition was marvellously gentle and mild, her warm and generous nature was a pleasure in itself to look upon, and a revelation of kindliness of heart. For she would bid her nurse give the breast to other infants and even to her playthings, because they had pleased her, and so invited them as it were to her own table in generosity of mind, giving a share of the best she owned to those who had given her pleasure. . . .

Those who were at the funeral tell me with surprise that you made no alteration in your dress, nor put any trappings of woe either upon your maids or upon yourself; and that there was no costly display at the funeral, but that everything was done with silence and restraint in the presence of our relatives. I myself am not surprised, for if you never dressed yourself up for the theatre, and thought any display useless even in matters of pleasure, you would naturally be frugal and unostentatious in grief. For a dignified woman ought to preserve her self-control, not only in feasts and revels, but also to consider it no whit less desirable in the tempests of sorrow and mourning, for moderation in grief is

not in contradiction to maternal feeling, as many will aver, but only to the unbridled passions of the soul. For we usually allow maternal affection the prerogative of longing for children who have died, and of giving them funeral honours and paying honour to their memory; whereas indulgence in the passion of grief, carried to extremes of expression, is no less culpable than intemperance in pleasure, though it is customarily excused, as being founded in grief and pain and not in enjoyment. What, on the other hand, can be more irrational than to check excess in laughter and joy, and yet to give free flow to the torrents of tears and weeping, which spring from the same source? And how foolish to quarrel, as some do with their wives for using perfumes and bright-coloured robes, and yet permit them to tear their hair in mourning, to wear black, to sit in idle grief and lay them down in sorrow. And worst of all is it to intervene and prevent their wives if they find them chastising their servants unjustly or out of proportion to the offence, and yet stand by and allow them to punish and torment themselves most cruelly in circumstances which especially demand kindness and gentle treatment?

Between us, my dear, there has never been occasion for such differences, nor, I think, will there ever be. For there is not a philosopher of our acquaintance whom you have not astonished by the simplicity of your dress and way of life, nor any fellow-citizen who has not been struck by your unassuming appearance at religious gatherings, festivals and theatres. And you showed great fortitude when you lost our eldest child, and again, when our lovely Chaeron died. For I remember I was returning with some friends from abroad, and entering my house with them, when the news of the boy's death was broken to me: and when they saw the general order and silence prevailing, as they afterwards told others, they thought that nothing terrible of the kind had happened, and that a false rumour had been brought us, so calmly had you ordered the affairs of the house at a time which generally gives an opportunity to disorder and confusion. . . .

Most mothers, when their children are brought to them, made all clean and shining by others, pick them up in their arms and dandle them like dolls, and then when they are dead,



they are dissolved in vain and unbridled weeping, not from loving affection, for love is reasonable and beautiful; but the disappointment of their worldly hopes mixed with a little natural affection makes their grief fierce and mad and implacable. Æsop knew this well enough, for he tells that when Zeus assigned their different honours to each of the gods, when Sorrow's turn came, he allowed her a share of honour, but only from those who might of their free will offer it. And this is how sorrow begins: everyone at first allows her free access, and when she has once established herself and become our lodger and pensioner, she can in nowise, nor by our best endeavours, be cast out. . . .

As for what is most to be feared, and most disastrous in such a case, I have no reason to be afraid of it, I mean the incursions of foolish women with their wailing and "weeping with them that weep", which only sharpen and embitter grief, suffering it neither of itself nor by anyone's help to fade and vanish away. I know what a severe struggle you lately had in defence of Theon's poor sister, when you warded off the women who kept running in with cries and lamentations, adding fuel to the fire of her pain. When men see a neighbour's house ablaze they combat the flames with all speed and every measure at command. But when the heart is on fire with grief they heap on fuel to the flame. When a man's eye is affected he is not suffered to put his hand to it however much he wishes to, nor will his friends themselves touch the inflammation. But the mourner sits and freely exposes his pain to every chance-comer to stir up the sore as it were, to a streaming rheum, and to provoke the smart, till from a small tickling and irritation it is aggravated to a grave and dangerous disease. . . .

I would have you also try to recall frequently to mind that time before our daughter was yet born to us, when we had no complaint to lay against Fortune; and then joining the present time to that, consider that our state is now the same as then. For we shall seem to regret our little girl's life, if we think that we were better off before her birth. And the two years of her life are not to be let fall from our memory, but to be placed among our blessings as a source of joy and pleasure. And we must not count



the shortness of this blessing an evil, nor be ungrateful to Fortune for her gift, if our enjoyment of it was shorter than we wished. . . . And certainly it would become us ill to cry out upon our life, if, like a book, it hath but one little blot upon it, though all the rest be fair and clean. . . .

# V

## LETTERS FROM ROMAN EGYPT

### LIII. *A strange request: Ilarion to his sister.*<sup>1</sup> (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)

Ilarion to his sister Alis, greetings, and to my dear Berous and Apollonarion. Know that I am still, even now, at Alexandria; and do not worry if they come back altogether, but I remain at Alexandria. I urge and entreat you to be careful of the child, and if I receive a present soon, I will send it up to you. If Apollonarion has a child, if it is a male let it be, if a female, expose it. You told Aphrodisias, "Don't forget me". How can I forget you? I urge you therefore not to worry. The 29th year of Caesar, Pauni 23.<sup>2</sup>

Deliver to Alis from Ilarion.

### LIV. *On the poor quality of a quilt, and other matters.*

Isidora to Asclepiades her brother, greeting, and good health, as I pray always.

I got your letter on November 4th, the letter you wrote on October 24th. Kindly write me exactly about the trouble in regard to the lentils and the pease, for in your letter to Paniscus you contradict yourself, saying first "I sold", and then "I did not sell". In any case do as you think best. Only be industrious over payments and takings, so that when Paniscus comes to Memphis you may not be in difficulties.

I sent you the money, 120 drachmae, for the quilt, but you must find out, if you come, who obtained it: it is worth no more than 50 drachmae. Give another quilt to Alexion, the dyer, on my account for my boy Artemas; it must be good, and not worthless, at 100 drachmae. Do not detain Achilleus, but give him two

<sup>1</sup> Probably also his wife.

<sup>2</sup> c. June 18th.

boats, so he can travel to Hermupolis, and take care of your health. Good-bye.

LIV. *To a man in pecuniary difficulties, to beware of the Jews.*  
(Translated by G. Milligan.)

Sarapion to our Heraclides, greeting. I sent you two other letters, one by the hand of Nedymus, one by the hand of Cronius, the sword-bearer. Finally I received your letter from the Arab, and read it and was grieved. Stick to Ptolariion at all times; perhaps he can set you free. Say to him, "I am not like anyone else, I am but a lad; with the exception of one talent's worth, I have sold you everything: we have many creditors, do not drive us out". Beseech him from day to day; perhaps he will have pity on you. If not, like everyone else, beware of the Jews. Better stick to Ptolariion, so you may become his friend. Notice that the document can be signed by Diodorus or the headman's wife. If you manage your affairs by yourself, you are not to be blamed. Greet Diodorus with the others. Farewell. Greet Harpocrates.

LVI. *On decorating a house.*

Capito to his dear friend Teres, many greetings. First of all, I was greatly delighted to get your letter, and to hear that you are well and that you found your wife and your child the same. With regard to the dining-room (for I will do nothing but what you require) I have of course had everything put in hand—in fact, rather more. For I greatly value and cherish your friendship, and everything that you enjoined on me in your first letter you will find accomplished. And I hope that when you come you will find things still further forward. I am immensely grateful to Primus and Tycharion for their assiduity in following your instructions, and for their attention to me. And the plasterers have done everything in bright colours and are still at it. With regard to the terrace portico, as you are intending to redecorate it, write me what you want done, what you mean to have there, whether the siege of Troy or some other subject. The space demands something of the kind. Farewell. Sertorius and his household greet you, greetings to all your family.

- LVII. *Lucius Bellenus Gemellus, a farmer, to his nephew, censuring his proceedings with a drove of pigs. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Lucius Bellenus Gemellus to his own Epagathus, greeting. I blame you greatly for the loss of two pigs owing to the fatigue of the journey, when you had in the village ten animals fit for work. Heracleides, the donkey-driver, shifted the blame from himself, saying that you had told him to drive the pigs on foot. I have already more than sufficiently enjoined you to stay at Dionysias a couple of days, till you have bought 20 artabae of lotus, believing it to be essential. Hasten with the flooding of all the olive yards . . . and water the row of trees at "the Prophet". Do not neglect these instructions. Good-bye.

The 15th year of the Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus, the 15th of the Germanic month.<sup>1</sup>

- LVIII. *Lucius Bellenus Gemellus to his son, concerning some rotten hay and other matters. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Lucius Bellenus Gemellus to his son Sabinus, greeting.

Aunes, the donkey-driver, has brought a rotten bundle of hay at 12 drachmae; the bundle is small and the hay rotten, the whole of it decayed—no better than dung. Sabinus, son of Psellus of Psinachis, who is with you, brought to the city a letter of the prefect to Dionysus, the strategus, telling him to hear. . . . Where did you put the notice of payment of the hay, and the contract for his loan of a mina? Send the key, and let me know where they lie, so that I may get them out in order to have them if I am about to settle accounts with him. Do not neglect these instructions. Greet Epagathus and those who love us truly. Good-bye. Send ten cocks from the market for the Saturnalia, and send some delicacies for Gemella's birthday feast . . . and an artaba of wheaten bread. Send the animals to carry manure at the vegetable ground at Psinachis and the manure carts, for Pasis is crying out that we must not allow it to be dissolved by the water, and let them fetch his hay. Send the animals at once.

Deliver to Sabinus my son from Lucius Bellenus Gemellus.

<sup>1</sup> c. Sept. 13th.

LIX. *Concerning a mouse-catcher. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Horus to his esteemed Apion, greeting.

Regarding Lampon, the mouse-catcher, I paid him for you as earnest money 8 drachmae in order that he may catch the mice while they are with young. Please send me the money. I have also lent Dionysus, the chief man of Nemeræ, 8 drachmae, and he has not repaid them, to which I call your attention. Good-bye. Payni 24th.<sup>1</sup>

LX. *A request to pay a debt. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Pisais to Heracleus, greeting. Whenever in necessity you want to borrow anything from me, I at once give in to you; and now please give to Cleon the three staters which Seleucus told you to give me, and consider that you are lending them to me, even if you have to pawn your cloak; for I have settled accounts with his father, and he has allowed me to remain in arrears, and now I want to get a receipt. Seleucus has evaded paying the money by saying that you have made an arrangement with him to pay instead. Now, therefore, please consider that you are lending the money to me, and don't keep Cleon waiting, but go and meet him, and ask Saras for the twelve silver drachmae. On no account fail to do this. The 20th year, Payni 25th.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> June 19th.

<sup>2</sup> c. June 20th.

## VI

### LETTERS FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE

#### LXI. *The poet Martial to Priscus.*

Valerius Martialis to his friend Priscus, greeting.

I know I ought to offer some defence for three years' most obstinate idleness, but I have no excuse that would acquit me even amid the busy occupations of city life, in which it is easier to succeed in being a burden to one's patrons than of assistance to them, still less in this provincial desolation in which, unless a man is immoderately industrious, he is bereft of consolations in his solitude, and of justification for his retirement. My real reasons are these: first and foremost, I am lost without that cultured city audience, to which I had grown accustomed, and feel as though I were conducting a law-suit in a foreign court. For anything in my books which has given pleasure was inspired by my audience.

That subtle criticism, that inspiration drawn from one's environment, such as libraries, theatres, assemblies, where pleasure itself goes to school without being conscious of learning, everything, in fine, which in a fastidious caprice I relinquished, I now most desolately miss. In addition, there is the backbiting of the local gossips, the envy that is their substitute for fair criticism, and the one or two malicious people who in a small place like this are as good as a throng. Against all this it is difficult day after day to keep up one's spirits: do not therefore be surprised if I have abandoned in disgust occupations which I used to indulge in with ardour. But since I would refuse you nothing on your arrival from Rome, when you ask me for my work (although, in giving you all I can, I am by no means discharging all I owe you), I have imposed on myself as a task what I used to regard as a pleasure, and have devoted a few days to composition, so as to be ready for your arrival with a feast meet for those ears of yours, which

have always been so indulgent to me. I should like you not to regard it as a burden to criticise and weigh carefully my lines, which in your hands alone are in no danger, and (this is difficult for you) I want you to judge my trifles independently of your affection for me, lest I send to Rome (if that is your decision) a book not merely written in the provinces, but positively provincial.

LXII. *Pliny to Septitius Clarus, who had failed to keep an engagement to sup with him. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

How happened it, my friend, that you did not keep your engagement to sup with me the other night? But take notice, the court is sitting, and you shall fully reimburse me the expense I was at to treat you, which, let me tell you, was no small sum. I had prepared, you must know, a lettuce and three snails apiece, with two eggs, barley water, and some sweet wine and snow—the snow I shall most certainly charge to your account, and at a high rate, for it was spoiled in serving. Besides all these curious dishes, there were olives, gourds, shallots, beets, and a hundred other dainties equally sumptuous. You should likewise have been entertained either with an interlude, the recital of a poem, or a piece of music, or, such was my liberality, with all three. But the oysters, chitterlings, sea urchins and the Spanish dancers of a certain—I know not who—were more to your taste. However, I shall have my revenge of you, depend upon it—in what manner shall at present be a secret. In good truth, it was not kind thus to mortify your friend—I had almost said yourself—and upon second thoughts, I do say so—for how agreeably we should have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling and instruction. You may sup, I confess, at many places more splendidly, but you can be treated nowhere, believe me, with more unconstrained cheerfulness, simplicity and freedom. Only make the experiment, and if you do not ever afterwards prefer my table to any other, never favour me with your company again. Farewell.



- LXIII. *Pliny to Cornelius Tacitus, the historian, on how to hunt and write books at one and the same time. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

Certainly you will laugh (and laugh you may), when I tell you that your old acquaintance is turned sportsman and has taken three noble boars. What, methinks I hear you say, Pliny? Even he! However, I indulged at the same time my beloved inactivity, and whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with dart and spear, but with my pen and tablets at my side. I mused and wrote, being resolved if I returned with my hands empty, at least to come home with my notebook full. Believe me, this manner of studying is not to be despised; you cannot conceive how greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. Besides, the solitude of the woods, and the very silence which is observed on these occasions, strongly incline the mind to meditation. For the future, therefore, let me advise you whenever you hunt, to take your tablets along with you, as well as your luncheon basket and bottle; for be assured you will find Minerva as fond of roaming the hills as Diana. Farewell.

- LXIV. *Pliny to Pompeia Clerina, his mother-in-law, on the efficacy of guests, to revive the flagging attentions of domestics. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

You might perceive by my last short letter, which is some time ago, that I had no occasion of *yours* to inform me of the various conveniences you enjoy at your several villas. The elegant accommodations which are to be found at Narni, Otricoli, Carsola and Perugia, particularly the pretty bath at Narni, I am extremely well acquainted with. The truth is I am more master in your houses than in my own, and I know of no other difference between them, than that I am more carefully attended in the former than the latter. You may perhaps have occasion to make the same observations in your turn, whenever you shall give me your company here; which I wish for not only that you may partake of *mine* with the same ease and freedom with that

I do of *yours*, but to awaken the industry of my domestics, who are grown something careless in their attendance on me. A long course of mild treatment is apt to wear out the impressions of awe in servants; whereas new faces quicken their diligence, as they are generally more inclined to please their master by attention to his guest than to himself. Farewell.

LXV. *Pliny to Calpurnia, his wife, who had been sent into Campania for her health. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

I never complained of business more than when it prevented me not only from accompanying you, but from following you at once, when your health took you into Campania. For at this time especially, I wished to be with you, so as to see for myself what improvement there is in your strength, and in your dear little person generally, and whether the amusements of that retreat, and the plenty of the district, agree with you. Were you in sound health, I could not feel easy in your absence, for there is harassing suspense in being every now and then wholly ignorant of what is happening to a dearly loved one: but now your sickness conspires with your absence to affright me with a thousand vague disquietudes. I fear and imagine every possible calamity, and as is the way of frightened people, my fancy paints most vividly just those things which I most earnestly implore Heaven to avert. Let me urge you then to pay regard to my solicitude by writing to me every day, even twice a day. I shall be easier, at least while I am reading your letters; though all my apprehensions will return the moment I have finished perusing them. Farewell.

LXVI. *Pliny to Quintilian: a wedding present. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

Though your own tastes, I know, are of the simplest, and you have brought up your daughter as befits a child of yours and a grandchild of Tutilius, yet as she is going to marry so distinguished

a person as Nonius Celer, whose station requires a certain display, she must be provided with clothes and attendants (circumstances which embellish real worth though they cannot augment it) suitable to her husband's rank. But as I am sensible your material wealth is not equal to the riches of your mind, I claim to myself a part of your expense, and like another father, endow the young lady with 50,000 <sup>1</sup> sesterces. The sum should be larger, but as I am well persuaded, the smallness of the gift is the only consideration that can prevail with your modesty not to refuse it. Farewell.

LXVII. *Pliny to Tacitus, on the death of Pliny the Elder in the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

Your request that I should send you an account of my uncle's end, in order to transmit a more exact relation of it to posterity, deserves my acknowledgments; for if his death shall be celebrated by your pen, the glory of it, I am well aware, will be rendered for ever deathless. And notwithstanding that he perished as did whole peoples and cities in the destruction of a most beautiful region by a misfortune memorable enough to promise him a kind of immortality; notwithstanding he has himself composed many and lasting works; yet I am persuaded the mentioning of him in your immortal writings will greatly contribute to eternize his name. Happy I esteem those whom Providence has distinguished with the ability to do things worthy of being written or to write things worthy to be read; but most happy are they who are blessed with both these uncommon talents, in which latter class my uncle will be placed both by his own writings and by yours. It is with extreme willingness, therefore, I execute, nay, solicit the task you set me.

He was at that time with the fleet under his command at Misenum. On the twenty-fourth of August, about one in the afternoon, my mother desired him to observe a cloud which appeared to be of very unusual size and appearance. He had just been sunning himself, then taken a cold bath, and after a leisurely

<sup>1</sup> About £450.

luncheon had retired to his study. He immediately called for his shoes and went up an eminence from whence he might more distinctly view this very uncommon sight. It was not at that distance discernible from what mountain this cloud issued, but it was found afterwards to be Vesuvius. I cannot give you a more exact description of its figure than by resembling it to that of a pine-tree, for it shot up to a great height in the form of a trunk, which extended itself at the top into several branches; occasioned, I imagine, either by a momentary gust of air which blew it aloft and then failing, forsook it, thus causing the cloud to expand laterally as it dissolved, or possibly the downward pressure of its own weight produced this effect. It was at one moment white, at another dark and spotted as if it had carried up earth and cinders with it.

My uncle, true scientist as he was, considered the phenomenon to be of importance and worth a nearer view. He ordered a light vessel to be got ready, and gave me the liberty, if I thought proper, to attend him. I replied I would rather study, for, as it happened, he had himself set me a theme for composition. As he was coming out of the house he received a note from Rectina, the wife of Bassus, who was in the utmost alarm at the imminent danger which threatened her, for her villa was situated just below us, and there was no way of escape except by sea; she earnestly entreated him therefore to come to save her from such deadly peril. He accordingly changed his first design, and what he began with a scientific, he continued in an heroic turn of mind. He ordered large galleys to be launched, and went himself on board one, with the intention of assisting not only Rectina, but many others; for the villas stand extremely thick upon that beautiful coast. Hastening to the place from whence others were flying, he steered his direct course to the point of danger, and with such freedom from fear as to be able to make and dictate his observations upon the successive motions and figures of that dreadful scene.

And now the cinders, which grew thicker and hotter the nearer he approached, fell into the ships, then pumice stones and pieces of rock, blackened, scorched and splintered with the fire. Then the sea ebbed suddenly from under them, while the shore

was blocked up by landslips from the mountains. After considering whether he should retreat, he replied to the captain, who was urging that course, "*Fortune favours the brave; carry me to Pomponianus*". Pomponianus was then at Stabiae, distant by half the width of the bay (for as you know the shore insensibly curving in its sweep forms here a basin for the sea). He had already embarked his baggage, for though at Stabiae there was no present danger, yet it was in full view, and certain to be extremely near as soon as it should spread; and he was resolved to fly as soon as the contrary wind should cease. It was full favourable, however, for taking my uncle to Pomponianus. He embraces, comforts and encourages his alarmed friend, and to soothe his fears by his own unconcern, desires to be conducted to a bathroom; when having bathed, he sat down to supper with great cheerfulness, or (what is equally heroic) with all the appearance of it.

In the meanwhile Mount Vesuvius was blazing in several places, with flames spreading and lowering whose refulgent brightness the darkness of the night set off. But my uncle, to soothe the apprehensions, kept saying that some fires had been left alight by the terrified country-people, and that what they saw were only deserted villas burning in the abandoned district. Then he retired to rest, and it is most certain that his rest was a deep slumber, for his breathing, which, as he was pretty fat, was heavy and sonorous, was heard by those who attended before his chamber door. The court which led to his apartment now lay so deep under a mixture of pumice stones and ashes, that if he continued longer in his bedroom egress would have been impossible. On being aroused he came out and rejoined Pomponianus and the others, who had sat up all night. They consulted together whether they would hold out in the house or wander about in the open, for the house now tottered under repeated and violent concussions, and seemed torn from its foundations. In the open air, on the other hand, there was the fear of falling pumice stones, light and porous though they were; yet this by comparison seemed the lesser danger of the two, a conclusion which my uncle reached by reason, the rest by balancing fears. They went out then, with pillows tied upon their heads with napkins, and this was their sole defence against the storm of stones that fell around them.

It was now day everywhere else, but there deeper darkness prevailed than in the most obscure night, which was in some degree dissipated by torches and divers illuminations. They thought proper to go down farther upon the shore to observe if they might safely put out to sea, but they found the waves still run extremely high and contrary. There my uncle, having thrown himself down upon a disused sail, called repeatedly for water, and drank it. Soon after the flames, heralded by a strong smell of sulphur, dispersed the rest of the company and put them to flight. My uncle they merely aroused. He raised himself up with the assistance of two of his slaves, but instantly fell, some unusually gross vapour, I conjecture, having obstructed his breathing, and blocked his windpipe, which was not only naturally weak and constricted, but chronically inflamed. When day dawned, the third from that he last beheld, his body was found entire and uninjured, still fully clothed, as if in life, looking more like one asleep than dead.

Meanwhile, my mother and I, who were at Misenum—but as this has no connection with history, and your inquiry went no further than concerning my uncle's death, I will put an end to my letter; suffer me only to add that I have faithfully related to you what I was either an eye-witness of myself, or heard at the time, when report speaks most truthfully. You will select what is most suitable to your purpose; for there is a great difference between a letter and a history; between writing to a friend and writing for the public. Farewell.

LXVIII. *Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, on the corrupt practices of Nicomedian contractors in the matter of aqueducts. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

The citizens of Nicomedia, Sir, have expended three million three hundred and twenty-nine sesterces on an aqueduct,<sup>1</sup> but they abandoned it unfinished, and it has actually been pulled down. They made a grant of two hundred thousand sesterces for another aqueduct, but this likewise is discontinued; so that after

<sup>1</sup> About £27,000.



having thrown away an immense sum, they must incur fresh expense to provide themselves with water. I have personally examined a most limpid spring from whence the water may be conveyed over arches (as was done in their first design) in such a manner as to reach not only the level and lower parts of the city, but the higher as well. There are but very few arches remaining, others can be erected with the square blocks of stone which have been pulled from the former work; part, I think, could be built of brick, as that will be the easier and cheaper way. But first, to prevent another failure, it will be necessary to send here an inspector of aqueducts or an engineer. And I will venture to affirm one thing, the beauty and usefulness of the work will be wholly worthy of the splendour of your reign.

LXIX. *The Emperor Trajan to Pliny, in reply to the foregoing.*  
(Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)

Care must be taken to supply the city of Nicomedia with water; and you will set about it, I am well persuaded, with due diligence. But it is most certainly no less incumbent upon you to ascertain by whose misconduct the Nicomedians have up to the present squandered such large sums. They must not be suffered to begin and abandon aqueducts to put money into one another's pockets. You will let me know the result of your inquiry.

LXX. *Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, on the Nicomedian fire brigade.*  
(Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)

While I was making a progress in a different part of the province, a prodigious fire broke out at Nicomedia, which not only consumed several private houses, but also two public buildings: the old men's hospice and the Temple of Isis, though they stood on opposite sides of the street. The occasion of its spreading thus far was partly owing to the violence of the wind, and partly to the indolence of the people, who, I am well assured, stood fixed and idle spectators of this terrible calamity. The truth is, the city



was not provided with engines, buckets, or any one single instrument proper to extinguish fires; these I have now, however, given directions to have prepared. Pray determine, Sir, whether it may not be advisable to institute a company of firemen, consisting of not more than one hundred and fifty members. I will take care that none but those whose calling it is shall be admitted into it, and that the privileges granted them shall not be extended to any other purpose. As this incorporated body will consist of so small a number, it will be easy enough to keep them under proper regulation.

LXXI. *The Emperor Trajan to Pliny, in reply to the foregoing.*  
(Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)

You are of opinion that it would be proper to constitute a company of firemen in Nicomedia, agreeably to what has been practised in other cities. But it is to be remembered that this sort of societies have greatly disturbed the peace of that province in general, and of those cities in particular. Whatever name we give them, and for whatever purposes they may be founded, those who are bound together for a purpose will not fail to form themselves into political associations before long. It will therefore be safer to provide such machines as are of service for extinguishing fires, enjoining the owners of house property to employ these themselves, and if it should be necessary, to call in the help of the populace.

LXXII. *Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, on a theatre and other works at Nicaea.* (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)

The citizens of Nicaea, Sir, have built the greater part of a theatre which, though it is not yet finished, has already exhausted, as I hear said (for the account has not yet been audited), above ten millions of sesterces, I fear, to no purpose. For either from the damp and yielding nature of the ground, or because the stones themselves were thin and friable, the building is sinking and displaying enormous cracks. The question certainly deserves

consideration, whether it should be completed or abandoned, or even pulled down. For the piers and bases upon which it is here and there supported appear to be more expensive than solid. Several private persons have undertaken to build parts of the theatre at their own expense, some engaging to erect the adjacent basilicas, others the gallery above the pit, all of which are now postponed, as the principal fabric is at a stand.

The citizens are also rebuilding, upon a larger scale, the Gymnasium, which was burnt down before my arrival in the province. They have already voted funds for the purpose, which are likely to be wasted, for the structure is ill-planned and rambling. Besides, the present architect (who, it must be owned, is a rival to the one first employed) asserts that the walls, though they are twenty-two feet thick, are not strong enough to support the superstructure, as their core is merely rubble, nor are they faced with brickwork.

Furthermore, the people of Claudopolis are sinking (for I cannot call it building) a large public bath in a hollow at the very foot of a hill, and are appropriating for this work the fees which those extra members you were pleased to add to their senate paid on admission, or are now paying on my demand. Lest, therefore, the public money in one place, and in the other your benefaction (which is infinitely more valuable than any pecuniary consideration), should be misapplied, I am obliged to beg you to send hither an architect to inspect not only the theatre and the bath, and decide whether, after so much money has already been laid out, it will be better to finish them as best we may upon the present plan, or to make improvements and alterations where they are required. Otherwise we may throw away our future outlay by endeavouring not to lose what we have already expended.

LXXIII. *Trajan to Pliny, in reply to the foregoing. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

You, who are on the spot, will be best able to consider and determine what is proper to be done concerning the theatre which the Nicaeans have begun; as for myself it will suffice if

you let me know your decision. It will be time enough for you to exact fulfilment of private undertakings with regard to the parts of the theatre when the main fabric is finished. These absurd Greeks, I know, have a foible for gymnasia: hence perhaps the citizens of Nicaea have been somewhat too ambitious in planning one. But they must be content with one which will answer their occasions.

You must decide for yourself how best to advise the people of Claudiopolis with reference to their bath, which they have placed, it seems, in a very improper situation. As this is no province which is unprovided with architects of skill and ingenuity, you cannot possibly be in want of one. Pray do not imagine it is your quickest way to get them from Rome, for it is from Greece that as a rule they come hither.

LXXIV. *Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, applying for his advice on the proper treatment of Christians. (Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)*

It is a rule, Sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of removing my scruples, or of guiding my uncertainty? Having never been present at any trials of the Christians, I am unacquainted as to the method and limits to be observed in examining and punishing them. Whether, therefore, any difference is to be made with respect to age, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance admits to a pardon; or if a man has been once a Christian, it avails him nothing to recant; whether the mere profession of Christianity, albeit without any criminal act, or only the crimes associated therewith are punishable; in all these points I am greatly doubtful.

In the meanwhile the method I have observed towards those who have been denounced to me as Christians, is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed I repeated the question twice again, adding a threat of capital punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For I was persuaded, that whatever the nature of their

creed, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved chastisement. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation: but being citizens of Rome, I directed them to be carried thither.

These accusations, from the mere fact that the matter was being investigated, began to spread, and several forms of the mischief came to light. A placard was posted up without any signature, accusing a number of people by name. Those who denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so, who repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and frankincense to your statue (which I had ordered to be brought for the purpose, together with those of the gods), and finally cursed the name of Christ (none of which, it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing), I thought proper to discharge. Others who were named by the informer at first confessed themselves Christians, and then denied it; true, they had been of that persuasion formerly, but had now quitted it (some three years, others many years, and a few as much as twenty-five years ago). They all worshipped your statue, and the images of the gods, and cursed the name of Christ.

They affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt or their error was, that they met on a certain fixed day before it was light and sang an antiphonal chant to Christ, as to a god, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—food of an ordinary innocent kind.<sup>1</sup> Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations. I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, called deaconesses. But I could discover nothing but depraved and excessive superstition.

I therefore thought it proper to adjourn all further proceed-

<sup>1</sup> It was a common accusation, as against the Jews in the Middle Ages, that they were in the habit of eating children.

ings in this affair, in order to consult with you. For the matter is well worth referring to you, especially considering the numbers endangered: persons of all ranks and ages, and of both sexes, are and will be involved in the prosecution. For this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread through the villages and the countryside. Nevertheless it seems still possible to check and cure it. The temples, at least, which were once almost deserted, begin now to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are again revived; while there is a general demand for sacrificial animals which for some time past have met with but few purchasers. From hence it is easy to imagine, what numbers might be reclaimed from this error if the door is left open to repentance.

LXXV. *The Emperor Trajan to Pliny, in reply to the foregoing.*  
(Translation by Wm. Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.)

The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in the proceedings against those who were denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper. It is not possible to lay down any general rule to be applied in all cases of this nature. But no search is to be made for these people. When they are denounced, and found guilty, they must be punished, with the restriction, however, that where the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall give proof that he is not, by invoking our gods, let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Informations without the accuser's name subscribed must not be admitted in evidence against anyone, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and out of accord with the spirit of our times.

LXXVI. *The Emperor Hadrian to Minucius Fundanus, Proconsul of Asia, on the correct procedure against Christians.*

I have received a letter addressed to me by your predecessor, the most illustrious Serenius Granianus. It is my wish that this matter should not be passed over without proper inquiry, and that

neither should these people be harassed, nor opportunity be afforded to the malicious interventions of informers. If, therefore, the provincials can substantiate their charges against the Christians, so as to sustain them before the court, let them rely on this procedure, but not act by means of mere clamour and outcry against them. The correct course, if anyone should bring an accusation, is for you to examine it. So if anyone brings such a charge, and can show that something has been done contrary to the laws, decide upon it according to the gravity of the offence. But, and by Hercules,<sup>1</sup> I mean it, if anyone brings such an accusation with the sole intention of slandering anyone, deal with the case as befits the gravity of the slander, and punish accordingly.

LXXVII. *The Emperor Hadrian, on his death-bed, to Antoninus Pius: a fragment. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

The Emperor Hadrian Caesar Augustus to his esteemed Antoninus, greeting . . . neither untimely, nor unreasonably, nor unexpectedly, nor incomprehensibly, am I being released from life . . . (I miss the) consolation of your presence if you were by me, and your loving care, in my sickness, and your words of comfort and encouragement. . . . I do not propose to give the conventional philosophic reasons for this attitude, rather I shall merely state the facts plainly. . . . He who was my father<sup>1</sup> by birth died at the age of forty, a private person, so that I have lived more than half as long again as my father, and have reached about the same age as that of my mother when she died. . . .

LXXVIII. *Marcus Aurelius to his tutor, Fronto: a day in the country. (Translated by C. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library.)*

Hail, most revered master.

We are well. By a satisfactory arrangement of meals I worked from three o'clock A.M. till eight. For the next hour I paced about in slippers most contentedly before my bedroom. Then putting

<sup>1</sup> Aelius Hadrianus Afer.



on my boots and my cloak—for we had been told to come in that dress—I went off to pay my respects to my Lord.<sup>1</sup>

We set out for the chase and did doughty deeds. We did hear say that boars had been bagged, for we were not lucky enough to see any. However, we climbed quite a steep hill; then in the afternoon we came home. I to my books: so taking off my boots and doffing my dress I passed nearly two hours on my couch, reading Cato's speech on the property of Pulchra, and another in which he impeached a Tribune. Ho, you cried to your boy, go as fast as you can and fetch me those speeches from the libraries of Apollo! It is no use your sending, for those volumes among others have followed me here. So you must get round the librarian of Tiberius' library: a little *douceur* will be necessary in which he and I can go shares when I come back to town. Well, these speeches read, I wrote a little wretched stuff, fit to be dedicated to the deities of water and fire; truly, to-day I have been unlucky in my writing, the lucubration of a sportsman or a vintager, such as those whose catches ring through my bedroom, a noise every whit as hateful and wearisome as that of the law-courts. What is this I have said? Nay, 'tis true, for my master is an *orator*.

I think I must have taken a chill, whether from walking about in my slippers in the early morning, or from writing badly, I know not. I only know that, rheumy enough at all times, I seem to be more drivelling than ever to-day. So I will pour the oil on my head and go to sleep, for not a drop of it do I intend to pour into my lamp to-day, so tired am I with riding and sneezing. Farewell for my sake, dearest and sweetest of masters, whom I would make bold to say I long to see more than Rome itself.

LXXIX. *Marcus Aurelius to Fronto: on a cold in the head. (Translated by C. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library.)*

Hail, my sweetest of masters.

We are well. I slept somewhat late owing to my slight cold, which seems now to have subsided. So from five A.M. till nine I spent the time partly in reading some of Cato's *Agriculture* and partly in writing not quite such wretched stuff, by heavens, as

<sup>1</sup> His father by adoption; the Emperor Antoninus Pius.



yesterday. Then after paying my respects to my father, I relieved my throat, I will not say by *gargling*—though the word is, I believe, found in Novius and elsewhere—but by swallowing honey-water as far as the gullet and ejecting it again. After easing my throat I went off to my father and attended him at sacrifice. Then we went to luncheon. What do you think I ate? A wee bit of bread, though I saw the others devouring beans, onions, and herrings full of roe. We then worked hard at grape-gathering, and had a good sweat, and were merry and, as the poet says, “still left some clusters hanging high as gleanings of the vintage”. After six o’clock we came home.

I did but little work and that to no purpose. Then I had a long chat with my little mother as she sat upon the bed. My talk was this: What do you think my Fronto is now doing? Then she: What do you think my Gratia is doing? Then I: And what do you think our little sparrow, the wee Gratia, is doing? Whilst we were chattering in this way and disputing which of us two loved the one or the other of you two the better, the gong sounded, an intimation that my father had gone to his bath. So we had supper, after we had bathed in the oil-press room; I do not mean bathed in the oil-press room, but when we had bathed, had supper there, and we enjoyed hearing the yokels chaffing one another. After coming back, before I turn over and snore, I get my task done and give my dearest of masters an account of the day’s doings, and if I could miss him more I would not grudge wasting away a little more. Farewell, my Fronto, wherever you are, most honey-sweet, my love, my delight. How is it between you and me? I love you and you are away.

LXXX. *Fronto to Marcus Aurelius.* (Translated by G. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library.)

To my Lord.

The coining of new words, or *onomatopoeia*, which is allowed to poets to enable them more easily to express their thoughts, is a necessity to me for describing my joy. For customary and habitual words do not satisfy me: so transported am I with joy that I cannot in ordinary language signify the gladness of my heart at

your having written me so many letters in so few days, composed too with such felicity, such friendship, such kindness, such fullness, such ardour, though you were distracted with so much business, so many duties, so many letters to be answered throughout the provinces. But indeed I had purposed—for I must not keep anything hidden or dissembled from you—I had purposed, I say, to incur even the reproach of laziness from you by writing to you less often, rather than to trouble you, amid your many engagements, with my letters, and tempt you to write; whereas you of your own accord have written to me daily. But why do I say *daily*? It is just here that the need for word-coining comes in. For it would be *daily*, if you had written one letter a day; since, however, there are more letters than days, that word *daily* falls short of the meaning. Nor is there reason, my Lord, for you to be vexed with me for actually fearing that my too frequent letters should be a burden to you; for the more you love me, the more chary should I be of adding to your work, and the more forbearing in respect of your occupations. What is sweeter to me than your kiss? That sweet fragrance, that light, dwells for me in your neck, on your lips. Yet the last time you were setting out, when your father had already got into the carriage, but you were delayed by the crowd of those who were saying good-bye and kissing you, it was to your advantage that I alone of all did not embrace or kiss you. So too in all other things, I will never set my advantage before your interests, for, if need were, with heaviest toil and service of mine would I purchase your slightest ease.

Considering, therefore, how much labour the writing of letters imposed upon you, I had determined to address you more sparingly, when you wrote daily to me. When I got those letters of yours, I was in similar plight to a lover who sees his darling running towards him along a rough and dangerous pathway. For he rejoices at the loved one's coming, at the same time as he fears the danger. Consequently I do not care for the story which is such a favourite with actors, where a loving girl standing by night in a turret with a lighted taper in her hand, awaits her young lover as he swims the straits. For though I burn with love for you, I would rather be severed utterly from you than let you swim so deep a sea so late at night, for fear the moon should set, the wind

dash out your light, the cold benumb your senses there, a wave, a reef, a sea-beast in some way work you harm. This language were more fitting to a lover and better and more sensible—not at the peril of another's life to seek a pleasure short in duration and fraught with regret.

Now to turn from fiction to reality, my especial anxiety was lest I should add to your unavoidable labours some superfluous trouble and burden, if besides those letters which your unavoidable duties require you to write daily to very many correspondents, I too should weary you with answering my letters. For I should prefer to sacrifice every advantage of your love rather than that you should suffer the slightest inconvenience to gratify my pleasure.

LXXXI. *Marcus Aurelius to Fronto.* (Translated by C. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library.)

To my Master.

You indeed are playful, but by this letter of yours you have sent me immense anxiety and intense distress, most acute pain and burning fever, so that I have no heart to sup or sleep or even study. But you would find some comfort in your speech to-day, whereas I, what am I to do? who have already forestalled the pleasure of hearing it and fearing that your visit to Lorium may be delayed, and am in pain, because you are in pain? Farewell, my master, whose health makes my health unimpaired and assured.

LXXXII. *Marcus Aurelius to Fronto: a chapter of accidents.* (Translated by C. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library.)

To my Master.

This is how I have passed the last few days. My sister was seized suddenly with such pain that it was dreadful to see her. Moreover, my mother, in the flurry of the moment, inadvertently ran her side against a corner of the wall, causing us as well as herself great pain by the accident. For myself, when I went to lie down I came upon a scorpion in my bed; however, I was in time to kill it before lying down upon it. If you are better, that is a consolation. My mother feels easier now, thank the gods. My Lady greets you.

LXXXIII. *A warning against Avidius Cassius. From a letter of Lucius Verus to Marcus Aurelius. (Translated by C. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library.)*

Avidius Cassius, if my judgment counts for anything, is avid for empire, as was already patent under my grandfather, your father. I would have you keep a watchful eye upon him. He dislikes our whole regime, he is gathering great wealth, he ridicules our letters, he calls you a philosophising old woman, me a profligate simpleton. See what had better be done. Personally I do not dislike the man, but you must consider whether you are acting fairly by yourself and the children in keeping, ready equipped for action, such a leader as the soldiers gladly listen to, and gladly see.<sup>1</sup>

LXXXIV. *Marcus' reply to the foregoing: the troubles of Princes. (Translated by C. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library.)*

I have read your letter, which savours more of the alarmist than the Emperor, and is out of keeping with the times. For if the empire is destined by heaven for Cassius, we shall not be able to put him to death, however much we may desire it. You know your great-grandfather's saying, "No one ever killed his own successor". But if the empire is not so destined, he will himself of his own accord, without any harsh measures on our part, be caught in the toils of fate; let alone that we cannot treat as a criminal a man whom no one impeaches, and, as you say, the soldiers love. Besides, in cases of high treason, it is inevitable that even those who are proved guilty should seem to be victims of oppression. For you know yourself what your grandfather Hadrian said: "Wretched indeed is the lot of princes, who only by being slain can persuade the world that they have been conspired against!" I have preferred to father the remark on him rather than on Domitian, who is said to have made it first, for in the mouths of tyrants even fine sayings do not carry as much weight as they ought.

Let Cassius then go his own way, more especially as he is an

<sup>1</sup> The result proved Lucius Verus' suspicions to be right, and Marcus Aurelius (see following letter) in the wrong.

excellent general, strict, and brave and indispensable to the state. For as to what you say, that the interests of my children should be safeguarded by his death, frankly, may my children perish, if Avidius deserves to be loved more than they, and if it be better for the state that Cassius should survive than the children of Marcus.

LXXXV. *Faustina to Marcus Aurelius.*<sup>1</sup>

At the time of Celsus' revolt, my mother Faustina urged your father Pius to do his duty by his own kin first, and strangers after. For an Emperor is scarcely virtuous who does not consider his own wife and children. You see how young our son Commodus is: our son-in-law Pompeianus is both elderly and a foreigner. Consider well what you will do about Avidius Cassius and his accomplices. Show no mercy to people who have shown you none, and would show none to me or to your children were they victorious. I shall shortly follow your route. I have not been able to come to the Formian villa because our dear Fadilla<sup>2</sup> was ill. However if I do not find you at Formiae, I will come to Capua, a city which can help both me and the children in our sickness. Please send Soleridas, the physician, to Formiae. I have no confidence in Pisisheus; he does not know how to treat a young girl. Calpurnius has brought me also a sealed letter; if I continue here I shall reply, through Caecilius, the old eunuch, who is trustworthy, as you know. I shall also send you a message by word of mouth, to inform you what Cassius' wife and children and son-in-law are said to be circulating about you.

LXXXVI. *On the bad discipline of the Syrian legions. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus to the Prefect of Syria.*

I have put Avidius Cassius in command of the Syrian legions, because they were going to pieces with indulgence and behaving with the morals of Daphne.<sup>3</sup> Caesonius Vectilianus has written

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps not authentic.

<sup>2</sup> A daughter.

<sup>3</sup> A grove and sanctuary at Antioch which became very dissipated in the second century.

that he found them all perpetually taking hot baths. And I do not think I have made a mistake, for you too know Cassius as a man of truly Cassian severity and rigour. Indeed, the soldiers cannot be controlled except by the time-honoured discipline. You know what the good poet says, a line which everyone quotes—

Rome stands secure on men and ways of yore.<sup>1</sup>

Will you see merely that the legions are adequately provisioned, for if I have judged Avidius correctly, I know that there will be no waste.

LXXXVII. *A criticism of Marcus Aurelius as Emperor. Avidius Cassius to his son-in-law, upon declaring himself Emperor.*

Unhappy state, unhappy, which suffers under the rule of plutocrats and men whose sole ambition is wealth. Marcus<sup>2</sup> is an admirable man, but in his desire for a reputation for mercy, he permits men to live whose lives he cannot himself approve. Where is Cassius, whose name I bear in vain? Where is that other Marcus, Cato the Censor? Where is our ancestral discipline? Long ago it perished, now it is not even missed. Marcus Antoninus spends his time on philosophy, on speculating about first principles, the soul, virtue and justice, but gives no thought to the state. This is a task for the sword, for common sense unstinted, to restore the state to its ancient condition. As for these governors of provinces, can I call these men proconsuls and governors who consider their provinces entrusted to them by the Senate solely as a means to indulgence and to wealth? You have heard how our philosopher's prefect of the guard was a beggar and a pauper only three days before his appointment, and then suddenly became rich? How, I ask, except from the vitals of the state, and the coffers of the provincials. Well, let them enrich themselves, let them be millionaires, in time they will be obliged to replenish the Treasury. Let but the gods favour the right, and Cassius' men restore good government to the state.

<sup>1</sup> Ennius: *Annales*, quoted by Cicero and S. Augustine.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.



LXXXVIII. *The Emperor Septimius Severus to Ragonius Celsus, Governor of Gaul, on the defeat of Pescennius Niger at Issus.*<sup>1</sup>

It is a pity that we cannot imitate the military discipline of him whom we have overcome in war. Your soldiers are a lot of stragglers; your tribunes take baths at midday, they have taverns instead of mess-halls, and brothels instead of barracks. They dance, drink, sing, and the only limit their festivity knows is to drink without limit. If there remained any vestige of our ancestral discipline, how could such things be? So begin by reforming the tribunes, then the rank and file. You will be able to control them, so long as you are feared. And learn this also from Niger: that the soldiers cannot be made to fear you unless the tribunes and generals are beyond reproach.

LXXXIX. *The Emperor Claudius Gothicus to Brocchus on the defeat of the Goths in Macedonia, A.D. 269.*

We have destroyed 320,000 of the Goths; we have sunk 2000 of their ships. The rivers are bridged over with shields, the shores are covered with lances and with swords. The fields are hidden under the superincumbent bones, no road is free from them. We have taken so many women that each soldier can have two or three allotted to him.

XC. "*Les laitues de Dioclétien.*" *The Emperor Diocletian from his retreat at Salona after abdication, to Galerius, who had invited him to resume the purple. A fragment.*

Could you but see the vegetables which I have raised with my own hand, you would perceive at once that I can never be lured from hence.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps not authentic.





## VII

### LETTERS FROM ROMAN EGYPT IN THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES A.D.

XCi. *From a soldier in Italy to his father. (Translated by G. Milligan.)*

Apion to Epimachus, his father and lord, heartiest greetings. First of all I pray that you are in health and continually prosper and fare well, with my sister and her daughter and my brother. I thank the lord Serapis that when I was in danger at sea he saved me. Straightway upon entering Misenum I received my travelling money from Caesar, three gold pieces. And I am well. I beg you, therefore, honoured father, write me a few lines, first regarding your health, secondly regarding that of my brother and sister, thirdly that I may kiss your hand, because you have brought me up so well, and on this account I hope for early promotion, if the gods will. Greetings to Capito, to my brother and sister, to Serenilla and to my friends. I send you by Euctemon a little portrait of myself. My military name is Antonius Maximus. I pray for your good health.

Athenonike company.

*P.S.*—Greetings from Serenus, son of Agathus Daemon, and from Turbo, son of Gallonius.

To Philadelphia for Epimachus from his son Apion.

To be handed to the office of the first cohort of the Apamaeans to Julianus, paymaster, from Apion, to be forwarded to Epimachus his father.

XCII. *A prodigal son to his mother: a fragment. (Translated by G. Milligan.)*

Antonis<sup>1</sup> Longus to Nilous, his mother, many greetings. Continually I pray for your health. Every day I make supplica-

<sup>1</sup> Misspelt.

tion to the Lord Serapis on your behalf. I wish you to know that I had no hope that you would come up to the metropolis, and on this account neither did I myself go to the city. And I was ashamed to come to Karanis, because I am going about in rags. I wrote to you to tell you that I am naked. I beseech you, mother, be reconciled to me. I know now what I have brought on myself. Punished I have been every way. I know that I have sinned. I heard from Postumus, who met you in the district of Arsinoe, how he inopportunately told you everything. Do you not know that I would rather be a cripple than have it on my mind that I still owe anyone a penny? . . . Come to me yourself. . . .

To his mother, from Antonius Longus, her son.

XCIII. *A young soldier to his mother. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Theonas to Tetheus, his lady mother, many greetings.

I would have you know that the reason why I have been such a long time without sending you a letter is that I am in camp, and not that I am ill; so do not grieve about me. I was much distressed to hear that you had heard about me, for I was not seriously ill; and I blame the person who told you. Do not trouble to send me anything. I received the presents from Heraclides. Dionytas, my brother, brought me the present, and I received your letter. I give thanks to the gods . . . continually. Do not burden yourself to send me anything. . . .

From Theonas to Tetheus.

XCIV. *To an erring wife. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Serenus to his beloved sister<sup>1</sup> Isidora, many greetings.

Before all else I pray for your health, and every day and evening I perform the act of veneration on your behalf to Thoeris<sup>2</sup> who loves you. I assure you that ever since you left me I have been in mourning, weeping by night and lamenting by day. Since we bathed together on Phaophi 12th, I never bathed nor anointed myself till Athur 12th.<sup>3</sup> You sent me letters which would have

<sup>1</sup> Probably also his wife.

<sup>2</sup> The hippopotamus goddess, benevolent to mothers and young infants.

<sup>3</sup> A whole month.

shaken a stone, so much did your words move me. Instantly I answered you and gave the letter sealed to the messenger on the 12th, together with letters for you. Apart from your saying and writing: "Colobus has made me a prostitute", he (Colobus) said to me: "Your wife sent me a message saying 'He himself (Serenus) has sold the chain, and himself put me in the boat' ". You say this to prevent my being believed any longer with regard to my embarkation. See how many things I have sent to you! Whether you are coming or not, let me know.

Deliver to Isidora from Serenus.

xcv. *On matching white violet colour and other domestic matters.*  
(Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)

Corbolon to Heraclides, greeting. I send you the key by Horion, and a piece of the lock by Onnophris, the camel-driver of Apollonius. I enclosed in the former packet a pattern of white violet colour. I beg you to be good enough to match it for me and buy me two drachmas' weight, and send it to me at once by any messenger you can find, for the tunic is to be woven immediately. I received safely everything you told me to expect by Onnophris. I send you by the same Onnophris six quarts of good apples. Do not think that I took no trouble about the key. The reason is that the smith is a long way from us. I wonder that you did not see your way to let me have what I asked you to send by Corbolon, especially when I wanted it for a festival. I beg you to buy me a silver seal and to send it me with all speed. Take care that Onnophris buys me what Irene's mother told him. I told him that Syntrophus said that nothing more was to be given to Amaranthus on my account. Let me know what you have given him, that I may settle accounts with him. Otherwise I and my son will come for this purpose. I received the large cheeses from Corbolon. I did not, however, want large ones, but small.

Let me know of anything that you want, and I will gladly do it. Farewell.

Payni 1st.<sup>1</sup>

*P.S.*—Send me an obol's worth of cake for my nephew.

To the Lord Heraclides, son of Ammonius.

<sup>1</sup> May 26th.

xcvi. *A boy's complaint to his father. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Theon to his father Theon, greeting. It was a fine thing of you not to take me with you to the city! If you won't take me with you to Alexandria I won't write to you, or speak to you, or say good-bye to you, and if you go to Alexandria I won't take your hand nor ever greet you again. That is what will happen if you won't take me. Mother said to Achelaus: "It quite upsets him to be left behind". It was good of you to send me presents . . . on the 12th, the day you sailed. Send me a lyre, I implore you. If you won't, I won't eat, I won't drink; there, now!

xcvii. *On cooking some Temple accounts. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt and J. G. Smyly.)*

Serenus to his dearest Theon, greeting. I have sent you other letters about the six robes of Pyrrhus, and the two cloaks, telling you to send them to me at any cost, and I am now writing in haste to prevent your being anxious, for I will see that you are not worried. You must know that an inspector of finance in the temples has arrived and intends to go to your division also. Do not be disturbed on this account, as I will get you off. So if you have time, write up your books and come to me; for he is a very stern fellow. If anything detains you, send them on to me, and I will see you through, as he has become my friend. If you are in any difficulty about expense, and at present have no funds, write to me, and I will get you off now as I did the first time. I am making haste to write to you in order that you may not put in an appearance yourself; for I will make him let you through before he comes to you. He has instructions to send recalcitrants under guard to the high priest. But do not neglect yourself, nor what I wrote to you to buy for me; and if you have any figs, bring what you have, as I am in need of them. Good-bye, most honoured friend.

xcviii. *From an erring daughter to her father.*

Serenilla to Socrates, her father, many greetings. Before all things I pray for your good health, and daily I make supplication

on your behalf before the Lord Serapis and the other gods who share his temple. I want you to know that I am alone. Think to yourself: "My daughter is in Alexandria", so that I may know that I have a father, and that the people here may not look upon me as alone in the world. Give the bearer of this letter another to tell me you are well. And I greet my mother and my brothers and Sempronius and his household.

To Socrates Sciphas from Serenilla, his daughter, through her brother Sarapammon.

xcix. *To Stephanus from Hephaestion, concluding with a threat to the gods. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

On receipt of the letter from my son Theon put off everything and come at once to me at the village because of what has happened to me. If you neglect this, as the gods have not spared me, so will I not spare the gods. Good-bye.

c. *A plot against a girl. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Lucius to his brother Apolinarius, greeting. Since now that Zopyrus is dead, there are persons making designs upon Thais, daughter of Amphithales, and you once had a conversation with me on this subject, I therefore inform you, in order that if you think fit, you may act before she is entrapped; for the son of Sebastinus has no mother, either. If you are making pickled fish for yourself, send me a jar too. Greet the children from me, and Isidorion. I pray for your health.

To Apolinarius.

ci. *Complaint of her absence, to a lady friend. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Flavius Herculanus to the sweetest and most honoured Aplonarian, very many greetings.

I rejoiced greatly at receiving your letter, which was given me by the cutler; I have not, however, received that which you

say you sent by Plato, the dancer's son. But I was very much grieved that you did not come for my boy's birthday, both you and your husband, for you would have been able to have many days' enjoyment with him. But you doubtless had better things to do, that was why you neglected us. I wish you to be happy always, as I wish it for myself, but yet I am grieved that you are away from me. If you are not unhappy away from me, I rejoice for your happiness, but still I am vexed at not seeing you. Do what suits you; for when you wish to see us, always we shall receive you with the greatest pleasure. You will therefore do well to come to us in Messoré,<sup>1</sup> in order that we may really see you. Salute your mother and father and Callias. My son salutes you, and his mother and Dionysus, my fellow-worker, who serves me in the stable. Salute all your friends. I pray for your health.

Deliver to Aplonarion from her patron Herculanus. From Flavius Herculanus.

CII. *On agricultural matters. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Isidorus to his brother Aurelius, many greetings. I told you about the two acanthus trees, that they were to give them to us; let them be dug round to-day. Let Phantias himself have them dug round. If he refuses, write and let me know. I shall perhaps come to-morrow for the sealing; so make haste with this in order that I may know. As to the bulls, make them work, don't allow them to be entirely idle. Carry all the branches into the road and have them tied together by threes and dragged along. You will find this of service. Don't make over anything to their masters. I shall perhaps give him nothing. I am causing them much trouble. Don't allow the carpenters to be altogether idle. Worry them. I pray for your health.

CIII. *Concerning property in pawn; a fragment. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Eunoea to a friend. Now please redeem my property from Sarapion. It is pledged for two minae. I have paid the interest up

<sup>1</sup> August.



to Epeiph,<sup>1</sup> at the rate of a stater per mina. There is a casket of incense-wood, another of onyx, a tunic, a white veil with a real purple border, a handkerchief, a tunic with a Laconian stripe, a garment of purple linen, two armlets, a necklace, a coverlet, a figure of Aphrodite, a cup, a big tin flask and a wine jar. From Onetor get the two bracelets. They have been pledged since Tybi<sup>2</sup> of last year . . . at the rate of a stater per mina. If the cash is insufficient owing to the carelessness of Theagenis, if, I say, it is insufficient, sell the bracelets to make up the money. Many salutations to Aia and Eutychia and Alexandra. Xanthilla salutes Aia and all her friends. I pray for your health.

<sup>1</sup> c. July.

<sup>2</sup> January.



## VIII

### IMAGINARY LETTERS OF THE EARLY CENTURIES A.D.

CIV. "*Tears, idle tears.*" *Petalë to Simalion, who cried too much:*  
*by Alciphron.*

I wish a girl in my walk of life could keep house upon tears. I should get on swimmingly; with them you are generous enough. But it's money I want, clothes, furniture, servants. My mode of life depends on them. No one has left *me* a snug little property at Myrrhinus. I own no silver mines. All I have is the money I earn, and the tear-soaked gifts of silly lovers. After a year with you, I am in a sorry plight; my hair is rough and dry, I haven't so much as seen any brilliantine the whole time. I am ashamed for my friends to see me with nothing to wear but my old Tarentine shawls, all in holes. It is time some good fortune came my way. What do you imagine I am going to live on if I stay with you? I believe you're crying again. Well, that won't last long. If I don't find someone to keep me, I shall die outright of starvation. I begin to wonder whether your tears are not all a pretence. By the Cyprian goddess, you say you are in love, that you pine for your beloved's society, that you cannot live without her. Well, what then? Have you no plate at home, has your mother no jewels that you can pawn, can you not borrow from your father, and bring me something?

Lucky Philotas! What a lover she has in Meneclides; not a day passes but he gives her something. That's better than crying. I, poor wretch, have got a professional mourner, not a lover. You even send me roses and wreaths as if I were an untimely grave, and you say you weep all night long. If you bring me a present I can do without the tears; if not, it's yourself you injure, not me.

cv. "*Drink to me only with thine eyes.*" *To a barmaid: by Philostratus.*

Your cups are of glass, but your hands touch them to silver and gold, so that they too can mirror the soft glances of your eyes. Wherefore I pray you set down the cup and let it be, at least for safety of the fragile glass. Drink to me only with thine eyes;<sup>1</sup> of such a draught drank Jove, and took to himself a comely cup-bearer. So if it please you do not squander wine, pour water only, and with the touch of your lips fill up the cup with kisses, then tender that to the thirsty. For who is so churlish as to ask the gifts of Bacchus atop of Venus' vintages?

cvi. "*I sent thee late a rosy wreath.*" *To a youth: by Philostratus.*

"I sent thee late a rosy wreath, not so much honouring thee, as giving it a hope that there it could not withered be."

cviI. *The Cynic's baby: Crates, the Cynic, to his wife Hipparchia.*

I hear you have had an easy confinement, but from yourself I have learnt nothing. But thanks be to God and to yourself. For you have understood that to take pains may be a means of avoiding pain. You would scarcely have had such an easy delivery if during your pregnancy you had not continued exercising yourself as the women athletes do. Most women when in that condition make invalids of themselves, and when their children are born, if indeed they are born alive, they are sickly creatures. Now after this demonstration, if the result has been as it should, take all care of our little pup. . . .

Let him have cold baths, let his baby-linen be rags, his food milk, and that in moderation. For carrying him about use the shell of a tortoise, for this is said to ward off childish diseases. And when he comes to the use of his tongue and his little legs, don't dress him up with a sword as Aethra did Theseus, but put him on a ragged cloak, and give him a little staff and a leathern wallet, which better protect a man than any sword, and send him to

<sup>1</sup> See introduction, p. 24, and Letter cvi.

Athens. For the rest, I will see that he is brought up to be a stork<sup>1</sup> for our old age, instead of a puppy.

CVIII. *Women are not inferior to men. Crates to Hipparchia.*

Women are not by nature inferior to men. For the Amazons who followed manly pursuits were in nothing excelled by men. If you bear this in mind, you will not allow them to surpass you. You would never convince me that you give way to feminine indulgence at home. For it would be shame on you to go so far in sharing the cynics' way with me, and to be esteemed in public for your husband's sake, and then to repent and turn back when the journey is well begun.

<sup>1</sup> Young storks had a reputation for feeding their parents.



## IX

### LETTERS FROM THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE

- CIX. *The Emperor Constantine the Great to Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, ordering the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.*

Such is the Grace of our Saviour, that no words of mine can fitly unfold the tale of its latest manifestation. For it is beyond all wonder that the Sepulchre, the evidence of His most sacred Passion, should have lain hid in the earth through so many years, now at last by the destruction of our common foe <sup>1</sup> to be revealed to his slaves whom we now set free. It seems to me that if the wise men of the whole earth were brought together in one place, and were to endeavour to speak words meet for such a subject, they could not touch even the fringe of the matter. For the miracle as much outruns human comprehension as divine things are above human. Wherefore I have ever and especially this one aim, that inasmuch as the true Faith is daily illumined by fresh miracles, so should all our minds be urged to follow the Divine Law in all reverence and concord. So, though I conceive that everyone must acknowledge it, I wish in the first place to convince you that nothing is more important to me than by God's command to have set free that Holy Place, which had been, as it were, the vile pedestal of an idol, and to have relieved it from a heavy load that crushed it. For that place which from the first was holy in God's eyes, later was made yet more holy, in that it brought the evidence of our Lord's Passion to light. This place, I say, it is our duty to adorn with the beauty of the builder's art. So it becomes your discretion to dispose and arrange everything needful for the work, so that not only the Basilica itself may be

<sup>1</sup> Licinianus, formerly Emperor in the East, defeated and put to death by Constantine A.D. 326.



superior to all others, but that everything about it may easily surpass the most beautiful edifices in all other cities.

The fabric and adornment of the walls I have already entrusted to my friend Dracilianus, deputy of the praetorian prefects, and to the Governor of the province. Our Piety commands that craftsmen and labourers and whatever else they have decided, with your approval, to be required for the work, shall be provided forthwith under their immediate care. As for the columns, however, and the marbles, or whatever you consider, on a general survey, to be yet more precious or ornamental, make haste to write to me personally in the matter. And when I have seen from your letter what sort of materials and what quantities are needed, they shall be brought together from all parts.

For the hall of the Basilica, I should like your opinion whether the ceiling should be panelled, or adorned with some other type of work. If it is panelled, it can be finished with gilding. It remains for your Reverence forthwith to notify the magistrates mentioned above of the cost of the craftsmen, labourers, and the other expenses, and to inform me immediately of your opinion not only about the marbles and the columns, but about the ceiling, whether you think panelling will have the best appearance.

May God keep you, beloved brother.

cx. *The Arian controversy. Constantine the Great to Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and Arius, a priest, entreating them to compose their doctrinal dispute.*<sup>1</sup>

Victor Constantinus Maximus Augustus to Alexander and Arius.

God is my witness, who is the Helper of all my endeavours, and the Preserver of all men, that I had a twofold reason for undertaking that duty which I have now performed.

It was my purpose, in the first place, to bring the diverse opinions of all nations respecting the Deity to a settled condition, and a single form, and secondly, to restore health to the body of the world, then suffering, as it were, under a malignant power, stricken as with a grievous disease. With this end in view, I sought to accomplish the one by the secret eye of

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated.

thought, while the other I tried to establish by military force and authority. For I perceived that if I could succeed in establishing according to my hopes a harmonious agreement amongst all the servants of God, the State itself would also undergo a change consonant with the pious desires of all men.

Finding then that the whole of Africa was pervaded by an intolerable spirit of mad folly, through the influence of those who with heedless frivolity had presumed to rend the religion of the people into diverse sects, I was anxious to check this disorder, and could discover no other remedy equal to the occasion than to send some of yourselves to aid in restoring mutual harmony among the disputants, after I had removed that common enemy<sup>1</sup> of mankind who had interposed his lawless sentence for the prohibition of your holy Synods.

I find that your present controversy originated thus. When you, Alexander, inquired what each of your presbyters thought on a certain obscure passage of Scripture, rather, on a passage which it was idle to investigate; and you, Arius, rashly gave an opinion which you ought never to have conceived, which having been conceived ought never to have been expressed, the whole question should have remained buried in silence. And by reason of this dispute which has arisen amongst you, communion has been denied and the most holy people of God have been rent into two factions, and have betrayed the unity of the common body. Wherefore, let each of you show forbearance the one to the other, and listen to the impartial exhortation of your fellow-servant. What then does he counsel you? It was indecorous, in the first place, to raise such a question, and in the second, to reply to such a question when proposed. For discussions such as these, which are enjoined by no precept of the law, are induced by the vain talk of idleness. And even if they should arise, for the exercise of our natural faculties, yet ought we to confine them to our own meditations, and not indiscreetly propound them in public assemblies, nor thoughtlessly confide them to the ears of everybody. . . .

The controversy between you does not rest on any difference about an important principle contained in the Law; nor does it

<sup>1</sup> Licinianus.

involve any heresy in connection with the worship of God. You both hold the same view on these points, you may join without hindrance in communion and fellowship together. Moreover, so long as you thus pertinaciously contend with one another about these small and insignificant questions, it is unsuitable for you to have charge of so many people of God, since you are divided in opinion among yourselves. Not only is it unbecoming, but it is regarded as contrary to the right.

In order to recall you to common sense by an example of an inferior kind, I may say that even the philosophers themselves are united in one sect. Yet they occasionally disagree on some parts of their tenets, and though they may differ in the very highest branches of science, in order to maintain the unity of their body, they still agree to combine together. Now, if this is so, how much more equitable will it be for you, who have been constituted ministers of the Most High God, to remain unanimous with one another in professing one and the same Creed.

But let us more accurately and narrowly examine what I have said, and see whether it be right that, for some trifling and foolish verbal difference between yourselves, brother should be set against brother, and the august Synod be rent by profane contention because you needs must wrangle together on points so trivial and altogether unessential? This is vulgar, and rather consonant with the folly of children than with the wisdom expected of priests and men of sense. Let us extricate ourselves with a good will from these diabolical snares. Our great God, the common Saviour of us all, has granted the same light to all men. Permit me, who am His servant, under His Providence, to bring my task to a successful issue, that by my exhortations and diligence, and earnest admonitions, I may lead His people again to join together in communion and godly fellowship.

I say this without any desire to force you to entire unity of judgment in regard to this truly idle question, whatever it may really be. For the reputation of your Synod may be preserved, and your communion maintained unbroken, however wide the difference among you on unimportant matters. For we are not all of us of one mind on every subject, nor is there such a thing as one disposition and judgment common to all alike. As far,

then, as regards the Divine Providence, let there be one faith, and one understanding among you, one creed in reference to God. Restore me then my tranquil days, my nights free of anxiety, that I may yet retain some pleasure in the pure light, and a cheerful serenity for the remainder of my days. Else I must groan without ceasing, and be bathed in tears; neither shall the remainder of my earthly life see any peace. For while the people of God (I speak of my fellow-servants) are torn in sunder by such an unworthy and noxious contention, how can I maintain my habitual serenity?

That you may have some idea of my excessive grief on account of this unhappy difference, I would have you know that on my recent arrival in Nicomedia I had intended immediately to proceed to the East, and while I was hastening towards you, and was already some distance on my way, news of this sorry affair reversed my purpose, lest my eyes should have to look upon a state of affairs, of which I could scarcely endure to hear. Let your reconciliation unbar to me the way into the East, which your mutual contentions have closed to me. And permit me speedily to behold both you and the rest of the people rejoicing together, and to offer up my due thanksgiving to the Almighty for the general reconciliation and liberation of all parties, accompanied by the cordial utterance of your praise.

CXI. *The Doctrine of Arius. From Arius, founder of the heresy called Arian, to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, an adherent, complaining of the persecutions he suffered from Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and summarising the doctrines respectively of the Catholics and the Arians.*

To his dearest and most revered Eusebius, the man of God, the faithful and orthodox, from Arius, unjustly persecuted by Alexander the Bishop, on account of that all-conquering truth of which he also is champion, greetings in the Lord.

Since good father Ammonius was about to set out for Nicomedia I felt it my duty to salute you by his hand, and withal to inform that natural affection which you bear towards the

brethren for the sake of God and his Christ, that the bishop<sup>1</sup> most violently strives against us, and leaves no stone unturned to hurt us. He has driven us out of the city as atheists because we do not concur in his public pronouncements, namely, that God is eternal, the Son eternal; the Father coeval, the Son coeval; the Son co-existing unbegotten with God; that He is begotten, and yet unbegotten, that neither by thought nor by any interval of time does God precede the Son; God eternal, the Son eternal; that the Son is of God Himself.

And because Eusebius, your brother bishop of Caesarea, Theodotus, Paulinus, Athanasius, Gregorius, Aetius and all the bishops of the East, assert that God had an existence prior to that of His Son, they have all been condemned, except Philogonius, Hellanicus and Macarius, who are heretics, and unlearned in the true faith. Some of them say that the Son was an eructation, others that He is an emanation, others also that He is unbegotten. These are impieties to which we cannot lend an ear, even though the heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths. What then say we, and believe, what have we taught, and what teach? That the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the Unbegotten; that He is not derived from any matter; but that by His own counsel and will He has subsisted before Time, and before all the world, perfect God, only-begotten, and unchangeable; and that before He was begotten or created or purposed or established, He was not. For He was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say that the Son has a beginning, but that God is without beginning. This is the cause of our persecution, and likewise because we say that He is of the non-existent. And this we say because He is neither part of God, nor any part of matter. This is the reason for our persecution. The rest you know.

I bid thee farewell in the Lord, remembering our afflictions, my fellow-Lucianist, and true Eusebius.

CXII. *The death of Arius. Saint Athanasius to Serapion, an Egyptian bishop.*

I send your worship's letters, in which you have urged me to describe to you both the events of my own life, and also of our

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria. See Letter cx.



times in general, and at the same time to give you an account of that most impious heresy of the Arians, by reason of which I have suffered so much, and finally a narrative of the manner in which Arius met his end. Three requests you have made me; with two of these I readily comply, and am sending your worship what I wrote to the monks, which will inform you as to my own history, and that of the heresy.

As for that third question, the manner of Arius' death, I hesitated a long time, in fear lest you should think that I was triumphing unjustifiably in the death of a fellow-creature. But since a controversy has arisen amongst you about the heresy, and has come to a point at which it depends upon whether or no Arius died in Communion with the Church, I was anxious to give an account of his death as a means to settle the dispute. . . .

I was not at Constantinople when he died: but Macarius, the presbyter, was there, and I had the story from him. Arius was invited by the Emperor Constantine, at the instigation of Eusebius and his party, to come to Constantinople, and when he came into the Presence, the Emperor asked him whether he held the faith of the Catholic Church. Arius took his oath that he faithfully held it, and handed over a declaration of his faith to the Emperor, in which he carefully left out all the points which were the reason for his expulsion by Bishop Alexander, and used quotations from Scripture with great craftiness and dexterity. When he took the oath that he had never held the opinions for which he was expelled from Alexandria, the Emperor dismissed him, with the words: "If your faith is orthodox, you have done right to swear: if not, and you have sworn, may God judge you according to your oath".

When he had left the Presence, Eusebius' party, in their usual boisterous way, wanted to bring him into church at once, but Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople, of blessed memory, withstood them, alleging that the founder of a heresy should not be admitted to Communion. But Eusebius' party, in a threatening manner, shouted out: "It was in the very teeth of your opposition that we persuaded the Emperor to send for him: so to-morrow, however you oppose it, Arius shall take Communion with us in church". It was the Sabbath<sup>1</sup> when they said this.

<sup>1</sup> Saturday.

When Bishop Alexander heard this he was distressed, and coming into church, stretched out his hands to God, and groaned and cast himself down on his face; prostrate before the Sanctuary, he prayed. And Macarius too, it seems, prayed with him, and heard his words. Two things he prayed for, saying: "If Arius is brought to Communion to-morrow, let Thy servant depart in peace, and destroy not the just in the same hour with the wicked. For if Thou wilt spare Thy Church—and I know Thou wilt—hearken to the words of Eusebius and his followers, and deliver not over Thine inheritance to destruction and shame. Take away Arius, lest by his entering into Church his heresy may seem to enter with him, and blasphemy be made as one with piety and faith. When the Bishop had prayed thus, he withdrew, in grave anxiety, and a wonderful and extraordinary thing took place. While Eusebius' party were threatening, and the Bishop was praying, and Arius, relying upon Eusebius and his followers, was vainly boasting and talking, he was moved by the necessities of nature, and withdrew to a convenience. There suddenly, in the words of Scripture, "falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst", and expired as he lay. Thus he was simultaneously deprived both of his Communion and of his life.

Such was the end of Arius. Eusebius and his followers, covered with shame, buried their accomplice, whilst the blessed Alexander celebrated Communion in piety and orthodoxy, amid the rejoicings of the Church, praying with all the brethren and glorifying God, not as if rejoicing in Arius' death, no indeed—for to die once is the common lot of mortals—but because the thing had been manifested in a manner beyond all human judgment. For the Lord Himself judged between the threats of the Eusebians and the prayer of Bishop Alexander, and condemned the Arian heresy, thus showing it to be unworthy of communion with the Church, and manifesting to all that though it was upheld by the Emperor and all mankind, yet it was condemned by the Church itself. So the gang of *Ariomaniacs*, who are Anti-Christ, have been shown to be enemies of God, and of religion. . . .

Now this is sufficient to confute contentious persons, read it therefore to all those who have raised the question, as also what I wrote a short while ago to the monks about this heresy, in order



that thereby they may learn to oppose the wickedness and impiety of the *Ariomaniacs*.

CXIII. *The Emperor Julian to Evagrius, a professor of rhetoric, making him a present of his Bithynian estate.*

For your kindness to me I am making you a present of a small property of four fields which my grandmother gave me in Bithynia. It is too small to bring a man riches or raise him to affluence, at the same time it has a certain charm, as you will see when I describe it in detail. In writing to you there is no reason for not using a thoroughly affected style, loaded with Muses and Graces.

This property is not more than two and a half miles from the sea; it is not, therefore, pestered with people selling things, nor with sailors and their tiresome chatter; on the other hand it is not devoid of the gifts of Nereus, for you get fresh fish there, so fresh that it is actually gasping, and if you leave the house and mount a little rise, you will see the Propontis with its islands, and the city called after the great Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Then you need not walk on seaweed or slime, nor are you incommoded by the unpleasing and nameless refuse which the sea casts up on the sands; you tread upon herbs and thyme, and sweet-smelling turf. There is peace profound on the place, whether you want to lie at ease with a book, or to rest your eyes by gazing on that loveliest of sights, the sea with its ships. When I was a youngster I thought this the most delightful of summer retreats, for there is plenty of running water, and a charming bath, a garden and trees. When I grew up I used to long for it, and often went there, and my visits there were never without literary occupation.

There is a modest record there of my husbandry, a small vineyard producing a sweet wine with a fine bouquet, which does not require to be long matured before it can harbour Dionysus and the Graces. On the contrary, the grape hanging on the vine, or just crushed in the press, exhales the scent of roses, and the new must in the jars is already "extract of nectar", if Homer is to be believed. Why, then, did I not extend the vineyard, why not a number of *clos* of such a wonderful vine? Perhaps I was not a sufficiently industrious cultivator, but since I am a small drinker

<sup>1</sup> Constantinople.

myself, and as far as I am concerned, Dionysus must keep company with the water-nymphs, I only raised what was sufficient for myself and my friends, and men of that sort are few. So then, dear friend, the gift I am making you, small though it be, is a gracious one between friends, a gift "from home to home", to borrow a word of the wise poet Pindar.

I have written this in a hurry by lamplight, so if there are mistakes, do not criticise them severely, like one professor judging another.

I was one man's field, then another's, to a third and fourth I passed, Each thought that he owned me, but I was Fortune's, first and last.<sup>1</sup>

CXIV. *Julian to Alypius, thanking him for the gift of a map.*

I had already recovered from my illness when you sent your Geography, but I was none the less delighted with the map. It is better drawn than any previous map, and you added verses to your gift, not of an acrimonious sort like the Cyrenean poet but such as harmonious Sappho might have wished to sing. So your gift is one that honours him that gives and him that takes.

As for your conduct of affairs, I join in your satisfaction at the way in which you take pains to accomplish everything energetically and yet gently, for to mingle gentleness and moderation with courage and strength, to show the former to the just, and to be inexorable in the latter towards evil-doers, for their correction, is in my opinion the work of no mean or paltry disposition. It is my wish that with these ends in view, you will combine them to one purpose, the attainment of good. Not without reason did the wisest of the ancients deem this to be the object of all virtue.

May you have long life in prosperity and health, dear and devoted brother.

CXV. *The Emperor Julian to Eustathius, the philosopher, authorising him to travel by the public post-vehicle.*

"A guest whilst he stays must be cherished, but sped when he wills to depart", thus Homer, in his wisdom, ordained. But

<sup>1</sup> These verses, from the Palatine Anthology, are perhaps a later addition to this letter, not quoted by Julian himself.

between you and me there exists something better than the ties of hospitality, a friendship based on education, and on our reverence towards the gods, so that I could scarcely be justly accused of transgressing Homer's law if I intended to keep you longer with me. But observing that your poor health is in need of greater care, I gave permission for you to return home and made arrangement for the comfort of your journey; you may make use of the public post. May the gods and Aesculapius go with you, and grant us to meet again.

CXVI. *Eustathius, the philosopher, to the Emperor Julian, in reply to the foregoing.*

What good luck for me that the permit to travel by Imperial post arrived too late! Instead of shaking with fright, perched on the post-carriage, being jolted on to the drunken muleteers, and the mules stuffed with barley, fat, as Homer says, with laziness and over-eating, enduring clouds of dust, and the barbarous shoutings of the drivers and cracking of whips, I can travel at leisure, along a covered, shady road, well provided with springs and halting-places for the hour of repose. So I have a fragrant rest under the shade of spreading planes or cypresses, with my *Phaedrus* or other book of Plato in my hand. Enjoying this untrammelled mode of travel, O divine and sacred master, I thought it unnatural not to write and tell you all about it.

CXVII. *Julian to the Emperor Constantius, on being proclaimed Emperor at Paris.*<sup>1</sup>

As far as concerns my projects, I have kept faith to the uttermost extent no less with the spirit than with the terms of our compact, with sentiments constant and unchanged, as substantial evidence can testify. When I was but newly created Caesar, you hurled me into the dreadful turmoil of battle. I was content with the power delegated to me, and like a faithful steward filled your ears with repeated news of the successes which rewarded our

<sup>1</sup> This account is transcribed, but not improved, by Gibbon.

hopes. Nothing did I attribute to the risks taken by myself, though there is abundant proof that when the Germans were routed and in retreat, I was ever the first in the fray, the last to seek repose from toil. But (if I may have your indulgence in speaking) if, as you suppose, there has been a revolution, it was the soldiery, who seeing themselves wearing their lives away unprofitably in many severe struggles, suddenly accomplished what they had long been meditating, in dissatisfaction and impatience with a commander who was himself but a subordinate, with a Caesar who was powerless to recompense their prolonged exertions and incessant victories. And this anger of the soldiers was met, not with promotions or even the annual pay to which they were entitled, but with something quite unlooked-for, namely, the order to leave the icy climate to which they are accustomed, to march into the most distant parts of the East, to be separated from their wives and children, and to go in poverty and rags.

Exasperated beyond their wont, they gathered together by night and besieged the palace, acclaiming Julian Augustus with loud and repeated shouts. I was terrified, I admit it, and withdrew out of sight; as long as I could I remained apart, seeking safety in silence and concealment. But since they gave me no respite, I came forth, and stood in the sight of all, behind the sole fortification of my defenceless breast, thinking to calm the tumult by my authority, or by soothing words. They flared up then in extraordinary fashion, and went to such lengths that when I tried to overcome their obstinacy with my entreaties, they pressed menacingly upon me and threatened me with death. Conquered at last, and reflecting that if I were struck down some other perhaps would gladly see himself proclaimed Emperor in my stead, I yielded, in the hope of appeasing their violence.

This is the tale of events, which I beg you will receive with equanimity. Do not imagine that anything else took place, nor heed the evil whisperings of the malicious, who, for their own profit, are wont to sow discord among princes. Ignore flattery, the mother of wrongs, give heed to justice, the most excellent of all virtues, and accept in good faith the equitable conditions which I propose, with the reflection that they are the best both for the

Roman state and for ourselves, linked as we are by the kind tie of blood, and by the lofty eminence of our fortune. Pardon me, for what I reasonably propose, I wish not so much to see carried out, as approved by you for utility and justice. With eagerness I await your commands.

I will set down in brief the measures which I consider necessary. I shall furnish teams of Spanish horses, and I shall mingle with the slaves and the guards a contingent of young foreign bondmen, barbarians from this side of the Rhine, or at least deserters who surrendered to us. Your Clemency will assign to us praetorian prefects of ascertained equity and merit; the remaining ordinary magistrates, and the promotions of military commanders, must be left to my judgment, as also the appointment of my personal guard. For it would be senseless, when it can be avoided, to surround the person of the Emperor with men whose characters are as unfamiliar as their sentiments.

One thing I will affirm without hesitation of any kind, that neither of their own free will nor under compulsion will the Gauls consent to send their recruits to foreign or distant parts, for they have been harassed with long-drawn disturbances and severe disasters; their youth is almost entirely wiped out, so that remembering past afflictions they will encounter fresh burdens with despair. Nor would it be opportune to send assistance from this province against the Parthians, for the inroads of the barbarians here have scarcely been stayed, and if you will suffer me to speak the truth, this province, after the continual blows it has received, is actually in need of powerful assistance from without.

If, as I think, I have written in a vein of salutary exhortation, actually, I entreat and beseech you. For I know (if I am not presuming on my position) what difficult affairs, situations almost abandoned and lost, have been saved and re-established by the agreements of princes, who have made mutual concessions. The example of our ancestors shows that rulers who are of this mind find a means to live in prosperity and happiness, and leave a cheerful remembrance of themselves to posterity for all time.

CXVIII. *The Death of Constantius. The Emperor Julian to his uncle on the death of the Emperor Constantius, who had died on the eve of civil war.*

The third hour of the night begins, I have no secretary, they are all engaged, and I have scarcely had strength to write this to you. I am alive, thanks to the gods, delivered from having to perpetrate, or to suffer, the irreparable. I call the sun to witness, whose aid I have invoked more than all the gods', and Zeus the king, that never have I wished for Constantius' death, rather have I prayed for it to be averted. Why, then, have I come? Because the gods formally bade me, promising safety if I obeyed, threatening if I disobeyed them, something which I trust they may never accomplish. Besides, when I became his declared enemy, I intended only to frighten him, and so to bring matters to reasonable negotiation. But if a battle was to decide between us, I decided to cast everything upon Fortune and the gods, and to await whatever in their mercy they might decree.

CXIX. *The library of Bishop George: the Emperor Julian to Ecdicius, Prefect of Egypt, asking him to secure some of the books left by George of Cappadocia, Bishop of Alexandria.*

Some men are addicted to horses, others pursue birds, others again, beasts; I myself from infancy have been imbued with a passion for acquiring books. It would, therefore, be strange if I could stand by and see them appropriated by men whose acquisitive greed is not sated by the acquisition of wealth alone, but who expect to make these also their easy prey. So do me a particular favour, find all Bishop George's<sup>1</sup> books, for he had a great many on philosophy, many on rhetoric, and on the doctrine of the impious Galileans. These last I would wish might vanish, but lest more precious stuff should disappear with them, let even these be carefully sought. Take George's secretary as your guide in

<sup>1</sup> The history of the bacon contractor who for a short season occupied the episcopal throne of Alexandria, and was massacred by an angry Alexandrian mob, is well told by Gibbon, who identifies him with the Patron Saint of England. The identification is not now accepted.



the quest, let him understand that he will be rewarded with his liberty if he prosecutes it faithfully; should he, on the other hand, be inclined to malingering, he will be put to the test of torture. I am acquainted with George's library, if not the whole, certainly a good part, for he lent me some of his books to get copies made, when I was in Cappadocia, and then took them back again.

CXX. *On banishing Athanasius. Julian to Ecdicius, Prefect of Egypt, complaining that he had not obeyed his command to banish Athanasius.*

Even if you write to me upon no other subject, you should have written about Athanasius, that enemy of the gods, especially as you have known for some time what I had decided. I swear by great Serapis, that if this god-detested Athanasius is not thrown out of Alexandria, in fact banished the whole of Egypt, by the first of December, I will fine your office one hundred pounds in gold. You know I am reluctant to condemn, but equally reluctant to withdraw when once I have condemned.

(*In his own hand.*) I am very much offended by this slight. By all the gods there is nothing I would rather see or hear of than that you had expelled Athanasius from the land of Egypt. Abominable fellow, with me on the throne he dared to baptise Greek women of good family. Persecute him.

CXXI. *The Emperor Jovian to Athanasius, affirming his restoration to the See of Alexandria.*<sup>1</sup>

Since we greatly admire your illustrious qualities, your blameless life, your general resemblance to the Lord Almighty, and your devotion to our Saviour Christ, we accept you, most honoured Bishop. We have also observed that no toil has caused you to flinch, nor any persecution of your enemies, that you have regarded perils and threats of the sword as so much excrement, and that you carry on even now the struggle for the

<sup>1</sup> On the death of Julian in Mesopotamia, Athanasius, and a deputation of the Arians, raced one another to the other side of the Euphrates to capture the new Emperor. Athanasius won: the above letter has the air of having been virtually dictated by Athanasius himself, for the discomfiture of the Arians.



truth, and continue to manifest yourself as a pattern of faith to all men, and an example of all virtue. Our Imperial Majesty therefore recalls you, and desires your return to your task as a teacher of salvation. Return then to the holy Churches and shepherd the people of God, and send up earnest prayers to God on behalf of our Clemency. For we know that by your supplication both we and all others who hold the Christian faith shall receive great succour from Almighty God.

CXXII. *Emperor Theodosius to Maximus the Usurper. A fragment.*

You must not be astonished if panic has come upon you, and to your adversary victory. For you have been fighting against piety, and he to defend it. You abandoned it, and in nakedness you are driven to flight. Your adversary fully equipped with its panoply is prevailing over you, for you are stripped bare of its protection; He who hath given us the Law of true religion fights ever on its side.

CXXIII. *Ausonius to Paulinus, afterwards Saint Paulinus of Nola.*

Ausonius to Pontius Paulinus, his son, who had sent him a poem on the Kings, of great length, and based on Tranquillus.

Now far Tartesian Calpe's stream conceals  
The solar steeds: now Titan's glowing wheels  
Have hissing plunged beneath the Iberian wave.  
Now Luna speeds the darkness to enslave  
With beams outrivalling the vanished sun,  
And whips her panting heifers to a run.  
Now bird and man, poor slave of sable care,  
In soothing dreams their strength awhile repair.  
The Ides were past, and mid-December sped  
To link her tail with Janus' double head.  
Long night now bids the Kalend's nineteenth date  
Emerge, the festal hour to celebrate.<sup>1</sup>

I suspect you have no idea what I mean by all these verses. Heaven knows, I am not quite sure myself. Yet I have an

<sup>1</sup> Neither Ausonius nor his translator took these verses very seriously.

inkling. It was early in the night before the nineteenth day of the Kalends of January, when your wonderfully literary letter was brought to me. With it you sent a most delightful poem in which you have compressed into a nutshell the first three books of Suetonius, which he devotes to the kings, and you have done it with such grace that in my opinion you are the only person who has ever achieved what is contrary to all nature, that is, brevity without obscurity. Among your verses I have picked out the following:

Europe and Asia, Earth's two mightiest limbs,  
With Libya third (though Sallust somewhat dims  
Her lustre, who uncertainly assigns  
Her land as part in Europe's broad confines),  
Have suffered kings and princes many a score  
Unknown to fame, whose uncouth names and lore  
No Roman tongues retain, nor memories.  
Illibanus, Numidian Avelis,  
Parthian Vonones, Caranus the sire  
Of Macedonian Pella's line entire.  
Then he who Mumbo-Jumbo taught the seers,  
Nechepsos: then a nameless reign appears  
And after it Sesostris. . . .

With what elegance and skill, what sweetness and harmony, you have tuned the strange accents of these names to Roman ears, without sacrificing the true character of the original sounds. And what am I to say about your gift of eloquence? I can absolutely swear that none of our Roman youth can equal your poetic facility. At least, that is my opinion. If I am wrong, well, I am your father, you must bear with me, and refrain from compelling me to express an opinion contrary to my natural sentiments. But, in fact, while I love you dearly, my judgment remains impartial and strict. Bestow on me, I beg, a continuation of such gifts, which simultaneously delight and honour me. To your poetic talents you add a delicious gift of flattery. For what else is the meaning of these lines—

Bold was the youth who named the Icarian deep,  
And he who wingèd flew to Chalcis' keep,

except that you call your own vigorous and ambitious energy rashness, and call me cautious, and commendably circumspect, a fit example for you to imitate? As a matter of fact, the reverse is true. For you fly high in such a way that you do not fall, while my old age is content to sit still.

I have composed this brief production in haste the very morning after the evening mentioned above. For your messenger is only waiting to take back a reply. When I have time, it will be a delightful task to ramble on to you at greater length, both to draw you out, and please myself. Farewell.

CCXIV. *Symmachus to his Father, in praise of his prose style, and describing a visit to Beneventum.*

I am overcome with pleasure when I realise that you do not think my letters silly; indeed I am most grateful that this should be your estimate of my writing. For to be commended by a man who is himself distinguished is seldom the reward of talent. But just as you gave me pleasure in this way, I think you were having a joke on me when you added that I should polish up anything that might be amiss in your letters. How foolish and contemptible were I, did I not see that you were teasing me. For what correction is there that it would be possible, or proper, for *me* to make in *your* work? You alone in our time have struck Latin coin from the Ciceronian die. Whatever of elegance was in the poets, of vigour in the orators, of accuracy in the historians, of erudition in the professors, you absorbed it all, the true inheritor of classic learning. You can't bamboozle me; I know all about teaching my "granddam to suck eggs". You are as learned in the usages of epic poetry as in making music with the simple instrument of prose. With your proficiency in writing speeches or poetry, are you pretending to be unworthy of my criticism? You are wrong; an unjustified conceit would be no pleasure to me. However, if you will spare me your attention, I will tell you what I have been doing these last days.

I have been idling at Baiae, safe from every eye. Then came a rumour that it was to be invaded by crowds. I was terribly afraid lest my peaceful solitude should be spoiled by undesirable

company, so I fled first to Naples, and thence, after a short stay, to Benevento. There I encountered such adulation and enthusiasm on the part of everybody, and I was made the occasion of so many celebrations, that I was absolutely oppressed with hospitality. For assiduity which is not repaid is irksome. Besides, although it is a large town, each of its magnates seemed bigger than the place—they were connoisseurs of literature, men of admirable cultivation. They spend their private fortunes lavishly on adorning their town. After the earthquake, when they were left with practically nothing, their shattered fortunes found their spirit unimpaired. Each citizen is intent, on his own account, upon some good public work. They turn night into day in their toil. So my chief object was to get away quicker than I originally intended, lest by giving too much time to me they should neglect their own employments, or else have to bear a double load. So I came back again to Baiae, for Baiae at the present time is absolutely quiet.

From Baiae then I greet you, and promise soon, if the gods will, to return. May good luck attend this promise. But of your good nature write to me frequently, as though to one who is to be longer away. Farewell.

CXXV. *Symmachus to his friend Agorius, on his recovery from illness.*

I am delighted that you are better, for my dearest wish is to see you well. Now if, by the will of the gods, returning strength has restored you to mental effort, let your letters spread themselves over many pages. I hate stinginess in writing. Brevity in a correspondent is more elegant than friendly. I don't want letters that trickle drop by drop from a narrow-necked bottle; what I want is a torrent that cannot be dammed, that flows from the deepest springs of the heart. Laconic brevity, you know, used to be admired. With you, however, I had rather follow the Latin, or if you prefer, the Attic habit, in which there was so much glory in eloquence that I suspect the Laconians chose the opposite direction from fear of comparisons. I adore loquacity, but you have to be goaded. At the same time, I must be careful not to

offend you by writing too much. So I will restrain my own disposition, in order to indulge yours. By which you must understand that you have reached such a height of importance and prestige, as to impose brevity on me unless you yourself write at great length. Farewell.

CXXVI. *Symmachus to his son, who delayed to pay him a visit.*

The thought of our good understanding induced me to hope for a visit from you. Almost I think myself mistaken in the hope that you would come of your own accord to see your father. Since, then, you hesitated to come uninvited, come now that I beg you. If Tivoli has made you fastidious, you are but changing your pleasant surroundings for the Laurentian woods. Do not be frightened by tales that we are in the wild depths of the country; the sea faces you as you approach, the villa is hard by a famous high-road. The park is full of game and beasts; they breed here, and are easily found and hunted. Even if these were lacking, there would be plenty for us to talk about, and abundant literary conversation—Tarentine and Sicilian pleasures. So if you can fall in with these plans, add yourself to the number of the rustics, and by degrees come to imitate men like Cato and Atilius, who went from the ploughshare to consular office.

CXXVII. *From Symmachus to Licinius, concerning a financial inquiry.*

Bonusus, a most excellent man, of remarkable incorruptibility, after Imperial service in a double capacity, has been entrusted, by the Imperial command, with investigations regarding a new basilica and bridge—a charge which he might fulfil with integrity and application if he had sole conduct of the affair. But the honourable Cyriades, an Imperial courtier, and also the engineer who previously had charge of the finance of both undertakings, has been associated with him in the inquiry, and has frequently, I am told, dissented from his findings. Thus it turns out that an inquiry which might be rigorously pursued if it were in the hands of a single investigator, is delayed by dissent,

intended to obstruct. Bonosus is afraid that he will be censured because, after so much talk, no conclusion has been arrived at. Wherefore he begs that if anyone thinks that Cyriades should still retain control of the works, as previously, he himself should be relieved of an awkward business; but if he is considered fit to undertake the inquiry, that it should be in his sole charge. So, for the love of our country, whose advantage I know you place first and foremost of all things, deign to entrust the matter to this excellent and distinguished officer, since beyond all doubt there is a grave deficiency of funds. For I hope that with the cessation of fresh outgoings, the money available will suffice for the completion of both works.

CXXVIII. *Libanius to Basil the Great, on the close-fistedness of Bishops.*

All bishops are screws. It is hard to get anything out of them; and you, just as you surpass all other bishops in learning, so you inspire me the more with fear that you will refuse my requests. For I am in need of beams—some other silly sophist would have said rods, poles or perches, not because he required them, but to display the wealth of his vocabulary, rather than the indigence of his circumstance. But it is a fact that unless you are generous I must spend the winter under the open sky.

CXXIX. *Basil the Great to Libanius, in reply to the foregoing.*

If to make money is the meaning of that word *screw*—that learned word which your erudition has fished up from the depths of Plato, tell me, my good man, who is the closer screw, I who am besieged by your eloquence, or you sophists, whose craft it is to make money out of words. What bishop ever charged a fee for listening to his sermons, what holy man ever taxed his disciples? It is you sophists set out your eloquence for sale, as pastry-cooks their honey-cakes. Now you see to what capers you are rousing an old man. Meantime, I have ordered as many beams to be supplied to you by your agent as there were soldiers fighting



at Thermopylae;<sup>1</sup> all of good length, and as your beloved Homer would say, with long shadows, which sacred Dios promises to provide.

CXXX. *Libanius to Basil the Great, in praise of a well-written letter.*

Surely, Basil, you must be living in Athens, without knowing it; never could the folks of Caesarea be listening to such discourse. Certainly my tongue is incapable of such things, but like a person suddenly confronted with a precipice, overcome by the shock as it were of such freshness and novelty of expression, it said to me, Father, *you* never taught that. This must be Homer, or Plato, or Aristotle, or Susarion, who knew everything. Thus said my tongue. If only *you*, Basil, could praise *me* for such eloquence.

CXXXI. *Basil the Great to Libanius, in reply to the foregoing, with which he was not pleased.*

To receive your letter was joy; to answer it, since you wish for an answer, is difficult. What shall I reply to such an "Attic" tongue, except that I am the pupil of fishermen; I confess it, and rejoice therein.

CXXXII. *Libanius to Basil the Great, in reply to the foregoing.*

What is the matter with Basil, that he should be offended at my letter, which was just a sophistic quip? You yourself taught me to jest, and they were solemn jokes, fit for any greybeard. But, in the name of our friendship and our common interests, release me from the sorrow which my letter has occasioned me, though it differed in nothing from all my others.

CXXXIII. *Libanius to his friend Optimus, who had become a bishop.*

Second thoughts are best. But why must you hurt and quarrel with a man who never offended you, you that most gentle Optimus, whom with pleasure I used to see composing with the

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* 300.



aid of notebooks or even without them?—you that stern guardian of the purity of the Greek tongue who held lectures at home, in which even I had a part. What is more, I have even heard that you were dragged by the whole town to that seat of honour, and that all your tears and prayers could not secure your escape. However, I am glad that you are in a position in which you can make use of your gift of oratory, so use it to stir up your congregation to praise, and display your rhetorical gifts.

If it would give you any happiness to make me happier, write me a line, and if you have a lad like Romanus, send him to me, for trouble spent on a boy of this kind is not thrown away.

*CXXXIV. Libanius to Hygienus, on a form of insomnia and its cure.*

It is quite usual to consult a doctor about sleeplessness, to tell him its painful effects, and to inquire by what remedy to relieve it. My dear friend Cleobulus,<sup>1</sup> I must tell you, is troubled with bad nights. The cause of this is not fever, is not headache, nor is it any uneasy sore. It is Severus, who worries our friend like a bug in his bed, although he lives a long way off. This is a new kind of pest, but the remedy is in your hand. Through the agency of our good Themistius you can forbid Severus to worry him any more.

*CXXXV. Libanius to Hesychius, on an accidental fire.*

I hear that a slave was carrying a lighted torch for a necessary purpose, when the wind caught the flames and carried them on to the house of one of your farmers, and burnt it down, so that the latter is demanding his house, and the former cannot give it him. So if you can bring a charge against the wind, or serve a writ upon chance, do so, but if you can't, don't call a mischance a deliberate mischief, nor demand redress from the unwitting instrument of the injury, who shares the sufferer's distress.

*CXXXVI. Libanius to Meterius and Alcimius.*

I do not write to you very often. What could I have to tell you? News of my own troubles? If you can bear up against your

<sup>1</sup> A professor, who was being greatly affected and kept awake at night by the mischievous insinuations of Severus.

own, that is good enough. Should I counsel you to show fortitude? Far be it from me. Should I write and tell you to come to me? I should not succeed in persuading you. For those in such a case it is better to write nothing than to write anything at all.

CXXXVII. *Aeneas, the sophist, to Julian, an architect, who had invented an apparatus for watering his garden.*

I consider myself to have acquired the veritable garden of Alcinous since I had this lovely machine which you invented, and the carpenter constructed. Let me describe it to you, for it is a most delightful sight. The biggest wheels are two in number, connected round their rims by boards and bolts, so that seen from without they have the appearance of one. Inside, on the flooring which thus makes the rim of the wheel, is a slave, who tries to run out. He treads a long course, though always in the same place, for the wheels run round with him, following as long as he is willing to run. The axle on which the biggest wheel is set, revolves without changing position, and simultaneously drives another smaller wheel, placed over the well. On this smaller wheel are laid the ropes and the buckets at even intervals. But the motion is too rapid, and the lesser wheel is too small in diameter, so that the space in the centre can only take a sprinkling or aspersion of the water. Thus most of it is poured out over the well, where it goes to the bottom easily enough; the trouble is to draw it up again.

Now this must be rectified, for it is a small matter for him who invented the beginning to work out the finish. Let us not then leave this lovely sight to languish for another's skill, lest we be like some painter who might draw a lovely figure of Helen, and forget to do her head.

CXXXVIII. *Aeneas, the sophist, to Diodorus, a learned professor.*

If controversy gives us plenty to chatter to each other about, and perfect concord is apt to produce a deep silence, then here is a kind of warfare, if the only one, that is better than peace. For what can be more delightful than to bandy words in one's darling's company? So let us break either our silence or our peace. May the sun never look down on silent friends or dumb professors.

CXXXIX. *To a greedy friend, Procopius of Gaza, to Jerome.*<sup>1</sup>

I really thought my sister's wedding was being kept fairly quiet, and though, of course, it is well known to all the neighbours, I certainly did not think it had reached you, whom I thought to be still sitting by the Nile. It seems, however, that nothing in the way of festivity ever escapes you, but that the moment any celebration is afoot, the sweet-smelling savours of the victims assail you from afar; indeed I rather fancy you outdo Homer's father Zeus himself in your passion for libations and for the smell of burnt offerings curling upwards in wreathed smoke. This is what the Nile and the well-liking Egyptians have done for you, after living with them; even now that you are at Elusa, you have acquired a sensitive nose to detect the smell of cooking anywhere on earth.

I very nearly beat your slave because he did not wait for you to write a longer letter. But the sight of the gifts he brought from you somehow quite altered my humour and dispelled my wrath. These I shall soon be requiting, for by this time you are either the father of a small daughter, or likely to become one.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not St. Jerome.

<sup>2</sup> Procopius had not long been married when this letter was written, and already had a small son. A daughter, who would probably be married extremely young, would in time be the recipient of wedding presents.



# X

## LETTERS FROM EGYPT IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES

CXL. *An anxious son to his father. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt).*

To Apollo from his son. Dearest father, I pray to the God for your prosperity and success and that we may receive you home in good health. I have, indeed, told you before of my grief at your absence from amongst us, and of my fear that something dreadful might happen to you and that we may not find your body. I often wish to tell you that having regard to the insecurity I wanted to stamp a mark on you. And now I hear that Heraclius, the present overseer, is vigorously searching for you, and I suspect that he must have some further claim against you. If you owe him anything, I wish you to know this, that I gave to Gaius two artabae of corn. . . .

To my lord and beloved father, Apollo.

CXLI. *On posting a young soldier. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt).*

Pausanias to his brother Heraclides, greeting. I think that my brother Sarapammon has told you the reason why I went down to Alexandria, and I have previously written to you about the little Pausanias becoming a soldier in a legion. Since, however, he no longer wished to join a legion, but a squadron, on learning this I was obliged to go down to him, although I did not want to. So after many entreaties from his mother and sister to transfer him to Coptos, I went down to Alexandria, and employed many methods until he was transferred to the squadron at Coptos. I desired them to pay you a visit on the upward voyage, but we were limited by the furlough granted to the boy

by the most illustrious prefect, and for this reason I was not able to visit you. If the gods will, I will therefore try to come to you for the feast of Amynesia. Do you then, brother, see to the deed of mortgage, so that it be prepared in the customary way. I urge you, brother, to write to me about your safety, since I heard at Antinoopolis that there has been plague in your neighbourhood. Do not neglect this, that I may rest more assured about you. Many salutations to my lady mother and my sister and our children, whom the evil eye shall not harm. Pausanias salutes you. I pray for your health and that of your household.

To the Oxyrhynchite home, for Heraclides, son of . . . from his brother Pausanias.

CXLII. *A notary to his son, concerning the proper dress to wear in court. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

To my son, Master Dionysiotheon, greeting from your father. As an opportunity was afforded me by someone going up to you, I could not miss the chance of writing to you. I have been much surprised, my son, at not receiving hitherto a letter from you to tell me how you are. Nevertheless, sir, answer me with all speed, as I am quite distressed at having heard nothing from you. Please go to my brother Theodorus, and make him look after Timotheus, and tell him to get ready for going in to attend court. Already the notaries of the other towns have acquainted their colleagues, and they have come in. Let him remember when he enters that he must wear the proper dress, that he may enter prepared. Take care they do not allow us to fail in coming to an understanding with each other, as we know that the same rule applies to all. For the orders which we received were to wear cloaks when we entered, therefore, let Timotheus, when he comes, come prepared to attend. I salute my sweetest daughter, Macaria, and my Mistress your mother, and all the family by name. I pray for your lasting health, my son.

Epeiph 23rd.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> About May 17th.

CXLIII. *From one coin-clipper to another. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

Eudaemon to Longinus, greeting. I entreat you, sir, to hasten to me, and bring, if you please, the crystal, and we can clip the cash. . . . You will be able to strain me some good Mareotic wine when you come with the value. Good-bye.

CXLIV. *A brother to his sister, asking her not to vex him. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

To the lady my sister, Manatine, from Probus, her brother, greeting.

First of all I pray to the Lord God for your security, that you may in health and happiness receive my letter. I wish you to know, my lady sister, that you should go to Petronius, my surety; get from him out of my pay one talent and a half. For you too know that we have no witnesses at all besides God and you and my wife. Give them then to my wife. Don't vex me; give them to her, since my son needs them. And in proof, when I met you at the Caesareum, and said to you, "Give me some money out of what you have of mine in order that I may buy myself a kettle", you said, ". . . use your own, and presently I will give it you . . ." I pray for your health.

Deliver to the lady my sister Manatine, from her brother Probus.

CXLV. *A son defends himself to his father. (Translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.)*

To my revered father Origenes, many greetings from Trophimus. Before all else I send many salutations to you and your consort Copria and Isidorus and Phullon and Helen and all our friends severally. You wrote to me in your letter that my boastfulness earns me the name of "Gift of Zeus"<sup>1</sup> because I sent you money; but I do not boast about what I sent you by Philoxenus. If you have sold the various things I sent you, write to me in order that I may send you more. I have been idle here

<sup>1</sup> "Diodorus."



for two months, otherwise I would have sent you all some more. I am keeping the money I have collected for the trial, for I am waiting for the memoranda. You wrote to me, "petition against Polydeuces". If the memoranda come to me, I will petition against him and against Sarapodorus. If it seems good to you, send me a pot of oil. You wrote to me, "You are staying at Alexandria with your paramour". Write to me, who *is* my paramour. I pray for your health.

Deliver to Origenes from Trophimus.

CXLVI. *To an aunt from an orphan niece, announcing the death of her mother.*

Madam and dearest Aunt, Tare, your sister Allous' daughter, greets you in the Lord. Before all things I pray God that my letter finds you in good health and happy. That is my prayer. I have to tell you that since Easter my mother, your sister, has died. When I had a mother, she was an entire kindred to me. Since she is dead, I am alone, with no one belonging to me, in a strange land. Dear Aunt, remember me, as if my mother herself asked you, and if the opportunity should offer, send some one to me. Greet all our family. May God keep you in good health many happy years, madam.

To Horeina, sister of Apollonius of Coptos, from Tare, daughter of her sister, at Apamia.

## XI

### LETTERS FROM THE SAINTS

#### CXLVII. *The Epistle of Paul to Philemon. (Revised Version.)*

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and towards all the saints; that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you unto Christ. For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. But if he hath wronged thee at all or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account; I, Paul, write it with mine own hand, I will repay it;

that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say. But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I may be granted unto you.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

CXLVIII. *Saint Cyprian to Eucratius, his Brother in Christ, regarding the admission of a play-actor to Communion.*

It was the love that thou dost bear me, and our reverence the one for the other, which did move thee, most beloved Brother, to take counsel with me whether a certain player should be admitted to our Communion, who has settled among you for the pursuit of his unseemly calling, and as a teacher and pedagogue not of sound learning, but of dreadful depravity, insinuates into the minds of others that which he had better not have learned himself.

I think, then, that it assorts neither with the Divine Majesty, nor with Christian discipline, to permit this vile and sinful contamination to corrupt the modesty and virtue of the Church. For under the Law it is forbidden to a man to put on female apparel, and transgressors in this article are damned. How much greater, then, is the offence if a man not only habit himself like a woman, but constituting himself a teacher of lewdness, represents in his very gestures the effeminate, the voluptuous, and the vile. Nor let him seek to make it his excuse, that he himself has ceased performance on the stage, while he continues to impart his craft to others. For no man may be deemed to have ceased from any calling who procures others to it in his stead, many instead of one; and by giving instruction contrary to the Law of God, and teaching how to transform a male thing into a female, to alter sex by guile, rejoices the Devil, who is ever busy to defile the fair handiwork of God with the sins of bodily lewdness and laxity.

If such a man should make penury and hard necessity his pretext, relief may be given even to him also, among those who are fed by the bounty of the Church; so he be contented with a simple and parsimonious sustenance, nor consider that his conversion is to be purchased by a wage, since it avails for his own and not for our salvation. Otherwise, let him reap what gains he will; for what can it profit him, that he snatches souls from the Eucharist of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that he should lead them filled with corruption and perversity in this world to the torments of everlasting hunger and thirst?

Therefore, to the utmost of thy power, call him from his present unseemliness and depravity to the way of innocence and the hope of eternal life, that he may be contented with the meagre, yet wholesome livelihood which the Church extends. And if in those parts the Church has not sufficiency for the needy, he is permitted to come hither and receive what may be needful for his food and clothing, to cease from being a teacher of damnation without the Church, and to become himself a learner of salvation within it.

Beloved son, I pray for thine abiding health.

CXLIX. *Saint Athanasius to Palladius, a Presbyter, regarding a rebellion of monks at Caesarea, against Basil the Great, their bishop.*

To our beloved son Palladius, Athanasius, bishop, greeting in the Lord.

I received your letter with the greatest pleasure, all the more because, after your wont, you therein breathed the spirit of true orthodoxy. Your reasons for staying with our beloved Innocent I learn now not for the first time. I knew them long ago, and applaud your piety. Since, then, this is your manner of life, write to me, and tell me how are the brethren there, and what the enemies of truth are thinking about us. For what you told me about the monks at Caesarea, I had it also from our beloved Dianius, that they are disaffected, and rebelling against their bishop, our beloved Basil.<sup>1</sup> I am glad you told me of this, and I

<sup>1</sup> Basil the Great.

have written to them what is fitting, namely, that they should be as children, and obey their father, not resisting what he commands.

If he were suspected of unsoundness of doctrine, then they would be right in resisting him, but if they believe as we do, that he is the glory of the Church, a champion of truth, a teacher of those who lack knowledge, then with such a man it is sin to strive. He should be most acceptable to them for his blameless life. For from what the beloved Dianius has told me, they have no cause of offence. "To the weak he becomes weak that he may gain the weak", of that I am confident. Then let our friends observe the range of his faith, and the nature of his rule, and give thanks to God, who has bestowed such a bishop on Cappadocia, one that any diocese might long to have. And do you, beloved, be so good as to recommend to them to conduct themselves as my letter indicates. For this will create a kindly disposition towards their father, and will preserve peace in the Church. I wish you health in the Lord, my beloved son.

CL. *Saint Basil the Great to Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, describing his retreat in Pontus. (Translated by Cardinal Newman.)*

My brother Gregory<sup>1</sup> writes me word that he has long been wishing to be with me, and adds that you are of the same mind. However, I could not wait, partly as being hard of belief, considering I have been so often disappointed, and partly because I find myself pulled all ways by business. I must at once make for Pontus, where perhaps, God willing, I may make an end of wandering. After renouncing, with trouble, the idle hopes which I once had about you, or rather dreams (for it is well said that hopes are waking dreams), I departed into Pontus in quest of a place to live in. There God has opened to me a spot exactly answering my taste, so that I actually see before my eyes what I have in idle fancy often pictured.

There is a lofty mountain covered with thick woods, watered towards the north with cool and transparent streams. A plain lies

<sup>1</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa.

beneath enriched with the waters which are ever draining from it, and skirted by a natural profusion of trees almost thick enough to be a fence; so as even to surpass Calypso's island, which Homer seems to have considered the most beautiful spot on earth. Indeed it is like an island, for it is enclosed on all sides, deep hollows cut off two sides of it; the river, which has lately fallen down a precipice, runs all along the front, and is impassable as a wall, while the mountain extending behind crowns the hollows in a crescent, and closes the path at its base. There is but one pass, and I am master of it. Behind my abode is another gorge, rising to a ledge above so as to command the whole extent of the plains, and the river bounding it, which is not less beautiful to my taste than the Strymon seen from Amphipolis. For while the latter flows leisurely, swelling to a lake almost, and is too still to be a river, the former is the most rapid stream that I know, and somewhat turbid too, from the rocks just above, whence shooting down, and eddying in a deep pool, it forms a most pleasant view for myself or anyone else, and is an inexhaustible resource for the country people in the countless fish which its depths contain.

What need to tell of the perfumes of the earth, or the breezes from the river? Another might admire the multitude of flowers and singing-birds, but leisure have I none for such observations. However, the chief praise of the place is, that being happily provided with produce of every kind it nurtures what to me is the sweetest fruit of all, quietness; indeed it is not only free from the bustle of the city, but is even unvisited by travellers, except for a chance hunter. It abounds in game, but not, I am glad to say, with bears or wolves such as you have, but with deer, wild goats, hares, and the like. Does it not strike you what a foolish mistake I was near making when I was eager to exchange this spot for your Tiberina,<sup>1</sup> the very pit of the whole earth?

Pardon me if then I am now set upon it, for not Alcmaeon himself, I suppose, could endure to wander further when he had found the Echinades.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A district near Gregory's home at Arianzus.

<sup>2</sup> Islands at the mouth of the Achelous, where Alcmaeon, who had slain his mother, found refuge from the Furies.



CLII. *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus to Saint Basil the Great, in reply to the foregoing.*

Laugh at my affairs, pull them to pieces, whether in earnest or in jest, I do not mind. Only smile, and go on lecturing me, make the most of my affection. Everything that comes from you is dear to me, whatever it is, however it appears. For you seem to me to carp at my place here, not for the sake of making fun, but in order to entice me in your direction (if I understand you aright), like a man who dams up a stream to turn it into another channel. This always seems to me to be your way.

Well, I admire your Pontus—and your Pontic fogs, and your retreat, which is just about fit for an outlaw, and the hills hanging over your head, and your refuge underneath, a regular mouse-hole, which you dignify with the names “Abode of Contemplation”, “Monastery” and “School”; and the wild beasts which test your faith, and your thickets of wild thorns, and your crown of steep mountains, with which you are not so much crowned as imprisoned, and your confined air, and the sun which you long for, and can only espy as through a chimney. Oh Cimmerians of Pontus, condemned not only to six months’ night, as some are said to be, but lacking even a portion of your time in the daylight, having your whole life as one long night, a veritable shadow of death, as Scripture saith.

And I admire your strait and narrow way, I know not if it leads to the Kingdom of Heaven or to Hades—I hope the former for your sake. As for the land in the midst, what do you wish? Am I falsely to call it Eden—with the river that divides it into four quarters, watering the world, or a dry and waterless desert, in which case have you a Moses to come and subdue it, by striking the rock with his staff? The truth is, that all of it which has escaped the rocks is cataract, and whatever is not cataract is dense, thorny thicket, and above the thorns is nothing but precipice, and the road above that is so steep and up and down that it confounds the traveller and demands gymnastic feats for safety. The river roars below, which you regard as quiet as the Strymon; it is not so full of fish as of stones, nor does it flow into a lake, but into a ravine, oh you exaggerator and fabricator of fine names! Your river is huge and horrible, and its roaring drowns the psalms of



those who live above it. The cataracts of the Nile are nothing to it, so does it shout you down day and night. It is rough, and unfordable, so turbid that you cannot drink it, and it has only this kindness, that when raging in its winter floods it does not quite sweep you away.

Such then is my opinion of your good fortune, and your Isles of the Blest. You are not to admire the crescent-shaped curves of the hills which shut off, or cut off, the approaches of your mountains, nor the strip of ridge which overhangs you, making your life like that of Tantalus, nor the draughts which you call breezes, nor the perfumes of the earth, which refresh you when they cease, nor your musical birds, which sing well enough, but their ditty is of naught but famine, and if they fly about, it is but in a desert. And none but hunters visit you, you say; add, in order to visit your dead bodies.

Perhaps all this is longer than the proper measure of a letter and too short for comedy. If you can take my fun in good part, well and good. If not, I will send you some more.

CLII. *On the nature of the ant. Saint Basil to an unknown correspondent; against Eunomius the heretic.*

He who says that the knowledge of all things that really exist is ultimately attainable, by some method and deductive process derived from the knowledge he has already obtained from a study of existences, has set his powers of reasoning to work, and starting from simple and trifling matters, has, so he alleges, trained his faculties of apprehension to that which passeth all understanding.

So let him who boasts that he has apprehended the knowledge of existences, interpret to us the nature of the most diminutive of phenomena. Let him unfold to us the nature of the ant. Doth she live by drawing breath? Is her body constructed upon bones? Are her joints pulled and drawn by sinews and tendons? Is the setting of her sinews controlled by a system of muscles and glands? Doth marrow in her dorsal vertebrae extend from her occiput to her tail? Doth this spinal marrow, by means of a covering of sinewy membrane, give motive power to her limbs?

Hath she a liver, a gall-bladder beside her liver, kidneys, a

heart, arteries and veins, membranes and cartilages? Is she hairy or smooth? Hath she a hoof, or a foot divided into toes? How long liveth she, how long goeth she with young? And why do ants neither all run, nor all fly, but some go upon the ground, others are borne upon the air?

So let him who boasts a knowledge of phenomena, first begin by revealing to us the nature of the ant. Then let him proceed to discourse upon that which passeth all understanding. For if your knowledge is not yet advanced to a comprehension of the smallest thing that goes, how canst thou make it thy boast, that thou hast with thine understanding comprehended the incomprehensible might of God?

CLIII. *Basil the Great to Antipater, Governor of Cappadocia, who had recovered his health by eating pickled cabbage.*

How excellent is philosophy, if only for this reason, that it cures even its disciples at a modest cost; for in philosophy the one and the same dish serves both for a dainty and for a sick man's diet. I hear you have recovered your lost appetite by eating pickled cabbage. At one time I used to dislike it both on account of the proverb, and of its reminder of the poverty that is generally its companion. Now I must alter my views and laugh at the proverb, and regard cabbage as a splendid nourisher of men, since it has restored our Governor to health. In future I shall think there is nothing like cabbage, not even Homer's lotus, nor the celebrated ambrosia, whatever it was, that the Olympians had for their salad.

CLIV. *Antipater, Governor of Cappadocia, to Basil the Great, in reply to the foregoing.*

"Cabbage twice is death", says the unkind proverb. As for me, I can die but once, whether I order cabbage many times, and even if I never have it at all. So, as you have to die in any case, do not be afraid to eat a delicious relish, which the proverb quite unjustifiably condemns.

CLV. *Saint Basil the Great to his friend Olympius, entreating him to write.*

You used at one time to write to me a few lines, now not even a few. Your brevity, if it goes on like this, will soon become silence. Return to your old habit, so that I shall not have to scold you for your laconic<sup>1</sup> behaviour to me as regards letters. I shall value even a tiny letter as a symbol of your great love. Only write to me.

CLVI. *On the art of letter-writing. Saint Gregory of Nazianzus to Nicobulus.*

Since you have raised the question—letter-writers are of two kinds, some are too lengthy, some too brief. Both are equally wide of the perfect mean, like archers who send their shafts now short of the mark, now beyond it: both are equally at fault, though from opposite causes. The test of a letter is its utility; we should not be long-winded when there is little to be said, nor too brief where there is much. Why should we? Is skill to be measured by a Persian schoene, or an infant's cubit? Should we write to such little purpose as that we might as well never have written at all? Are we to imitate a noonday shadow, or perspective lines drawn toward us, whose extremities meet in front of us and are visible only by glimpses, that are, in plain words, mere impressions of impressions? We must avoid the extreme in both directions, and concentrate on achieving the perfect mean. So much for brevity.

As for method of expression, the rhetorical is clearly to be avoided, and the simple and natural preferred; in short, that is the best kind of letter, that convinces both the simple and the learned alike, the former, as being within reach of the multitude, the latter as being above them. It should be of a perfect lucidity. For it is equally annoying to have to guess a riddle, and to puzzle out a letter.

The third quality in a letter is charm. Of this we shall be certain if we take care not to write baldly, and ungracefully,

<sup>1</sup> Basil and his friends admired what they regarded as laconic writing, and usually praised one another for it.

without ornament, order or form, or for instance, without apophthegms or proverbs, *mots*, jokes or enigmas, by which composition is sweetened. Nor should we be guilty of using these figures to excess; if their absence seems unlettered, excess shows intemperance. They are to be used about as much as purple in weaving.

Figures of speech we may employ, so they be few, and above reproach. Antitheses, and corresponding clauses, we shall gladly leave to the sophists, and if we do sometimes employ them, let it be by way of a joke, not in seriousness. For the rest, I shall only add what I once heard a clever man say about the eagle, that when the birds were setting about electing a king, and each came decked out in his different finery, the finest thing about the eagle was that he did not set up to be fine. This is of especial importance in letter-writing, to avoid superficial finery, and get as near as possible to the natural. So much for letters—and I write you this in a letter, though perhaps these rules should not be applied to myself, who have greater matters on hand. The rest your own diligence will work out, for you are a ready learner and the experts in these arts will instruct you.

CLVII. *Gregory to Theodore, Archbishop of Tyana, giving his opinion of Synods and Conventions of the Church.*

You summon me? I come at once, but strictly for a private visit to you alone. Synods and Conventions I salute from afar, for I know from experience that most of them are sorry affairs, to say the least. What else? Give me your prayers to help my just desires that what I earnestly crave may be granted to me.

CLVIII. *Gregory to Amphilochius, begging him for a gift of vegetables with which to entertain Basil the Great.*

I did not ask you for bread, any more than I would look for water from the people of Ostracine. But it is not extraordinary, nor contrary to friendship, to ask you, a man of Ozi-zala, for vegetables, of which you have enormous abundance, and we a great dearth. So make up your mind to send me some,

and plenty of them, and of the best quality, or, at any rate, as many as you can spare (for even small quantities are great to those who lack utterly), for I am about to receive the great Basil, and you who know him when he is full, and philosophical, would not like to see him hungry, and cross.

CLIX. *Gregory to the same.*

What a very small quantity of vegetables you sent! They must be made of gold. But really, your whole wealth is in gardens, rivers, groves and orchards, and your land is rich in vegetables, as is that of others in gold, and you dwell by verdant meads. Corn, on the other hand, is a fairy-tale to you, and bread with you is "*panis angelicus*", as they say, so precious and precarious is it. So either send us a more generous supply of vegetables, or I will threaten you with nothing less than a cessation of your corn supply. And I shall find out whether it is true that "cicalas live on dew".<sup>1</sup>

CLX. *Gregory to the same.*

You're making fun. Well can I picture an Ozizalean in danger of starvation, when he has taken especial pains with his gardening! This, however, can be said of them, that even when dead of hunger, they smell sweet, and have a splendid funeral. Why? Because they are covered with quantities of all sorts of flowers.

CLXI. *St. Gregory to Basil the Great, who had appointed him to the obscure bishopric of Sasima against his will.*

You accuse me of indolence and sloth because I would not accept your See of Sasima, nor bestirred myself, in episcopal fashion, to become an occasion for your controversies, like a bone thrown to dogs. My principal business is always to keep clear of business, and to give you some conception of my good qualities—I take such a pride in peace and quiet that I regard myself as a pattern to all men of this sort of virtue. If only the

<sup>1</sup> So Aristotle thought, Virgil and Pliny. See H. Fabre, *Social Life in the Insect World*.

world would copy me in this, the Church would be free from broils, and the Faith, which is used by all as a weapon in their private differences, would not be torn in sunder.

CLXII. *A question of a divorce. Gregory to his friend Veranius, who had quarrelled with his son-in-law, and desired his daughter to obtain a divorce.*

Public executioners are guilty of no crime, in fact, they are fulfilling the law, nor is the sword by which offenders pay the penalty, unlawful. Nevertheless, the executioner is not an object of esteem, nor his sword regarded as an agreeable implement. In the same way, I cannot tolerate the dislike I should merit if I confirmed this divorce with my hand and word. Far better is it to be a means to union and love, than to division and severance. This, I think, our excellent Governor had in mind, when he entrusted your daughter's case to me, knowing I would not hastily or unfeelingly proceed with the divorce. For he proposed me, a bishop, not a judge, to mediate in your trouble. So I beg you to indulge my hesitation, and if better counsels prevail, to make use of me as a servant to your desire, for I take a pleasure in such commands. But if the worse and more cruel deed is performed, one such as I have never to this day set my hand to, look for someone else more suitable to your purpose. I have not the time to offend God, to whom I render account for every action and thought, for the sake of your friendship, though I hold you in all respects in the highest esteem. To tell the truth, I will believe your daughter only when she can shake off her awe of you and boldly speak out the truth. At present her position is pitiable, for you command her words, her husband, her tears.

CLXIII. *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus to Saint Gregory of Nyssa,<sup>1</sup> on the death of Basil the Great.*

This, then, my troubled life had in store, that I should hear of the death of Basil, and of the passing of that holy spirit which has sped from our midst to sojourn with the Lord, for whose presence his whole life was one long preparation. And this has

<sup>1</sup> Brother of Basil the Great.



now been added to all my losses, that, because of this bodily infirmity which now oppresses me with great peril and pain, I cannot kiss his holy dust nor be with you to practise the consolations of true philosophy or to comfort our mutual friends.

But the desolation of the Church, shorn of such glory, deprived of such a crown, no one, no one at least with any feeling, can bear to see with his eyes, to hear of with his ears. You, I think, though you have many friends, and will hear many words of comfort, will not receive from anyone so much consolation as from yourself, and from your recollections of him. For you two were an example of philosophy to all men, a spiritual standard, as it were, of restraint in prosperity, of fortitude in adversity. For philosophy is twofold, it includes moderation in prosperity and composure in adversity.

So much for what I would say to your Excellence. For myself, what time will comfort me who write this, what reasoning other than your company and your converse, which before all things the blessed departed has left to me, that seeing his graces in you as in a clear and bright mirror, I may think I possess him still?

CLXIV. *Dionysus, called the Areopagite, to Sosipater, a priest, warning him against religious dispute.*

Do not, my venerated friend, deem that to be a victory, which consists in merely attacking a ritual or a faith that you consider inconsistent with truth; nor is all necessarily well with Sosipater, if he is overwhelmingly successful in argument. For it is possible that to your eyes, and to those of others, truth, which is one, may, among so many falsehoods, be hid. For merely not to be black, does not suffice to make anything white, nor is that which is not horse, inevitably man. Take my advice and listen to me: give up debating with others, but so deliver yourself upon truth, that your words are incontrovertible.

CLXV. *Paulinus of Nola to his friend Gestidius.*

Paulinus to the justly-esteemed lord Gestidius.

It is an insult to offer anything countrified and from the land to a personage who is well supplied with the delicacies of the



sea,<sup>1</sup> but to give myself the occasion for a chat with you, my dear man, and in order to add a little sweetening to my letter, I am sending you just a few of the very few *beccaficoes* which my lads bring home at night. And since they are so few that I blush for them, I have spun out my verses as if words could add to their number. But since neither the birds nor the verses have anything to recommend them, you will do a kind and friendly deed and pardon both, so that the fewness of the one will not seem mean, nor the excess of the other odious.

Come, take these feathered dainties of the air  
 In country woodlands bred, to grace your fare;  
 Poor silly victims, to their doom betrayed,  
 By crafty fowler hid in ferny shade,  
 With mimicked wood-notes, and deceiving cries,  
 Till on the well-limed bough each, captive, dies.  
 And now the fowler from his cruel toils,  
 To market brings his load of tiny spoils,  
 Of no mean value, though but light and small,  
 And guilefully arrays them on his stall.  
 The plump before, the lean behind he lays,  
 For leanness but offends a client's gaze,  
 The plumper birds must first enchant his eye.  
 (The skinny ones can figure by and by!)

CLXVI. *Sulpicius Severus, a priest of Aquitaine, to his friend Saint Paulinus of Nola, introducing a new cook.*

I hear that all your cooks have given notice, because, I suspect, they disdained to minister to your unassuming commissariat, so I am sending you a lad from my own kitchen, able to cook the innocuous bean, to serve the modest beetroot dressed with vinegar and sauce, and to make the humble porridge palatable to hungry monks. He is innocent of the use of pepper, and of spices he knows naught; he is familiar with cummin, and is especially ready with the noisy pestle and mortar, to crush sweet herbs. He has one fault—he is no mean peril to all gardens; let

<sup>1</sup> Fish were esteemed in antiquity as a great luxury. Epicurus, the austere philosopher, warned his disciples against "women and fish".

him in, and he will cut down everything in reach, and for cutting mallows, he is insatiable. As for keeping himself in firewood, he won't swindle you, but he will burn everything he can get hold of, he will chop it up and will not even hesitate to lay hands on the roof, or the ancient timbers of the house.

With these virtues and foibles, I trust he will be a son to you, rather than a servant, since you do not disdain to call the very humblest your children. I would have liked to serve you myself in his stead, but if the wish is on the way to the deed, remember me at your dinners and your cheerful suppers, for it is better to be a servant to you than a master to others. Farewell.

CLXVII. *Saint Ambrose to his friend Felix, Bishop of Como, who had sent him a present of mushrooms.*

I have received your present of mushrooms; they were of unusual size, and really excited much admiration. I did not like to keep them hidden in my bosom, as the saying is, but preferred to show them off to others. The result was I gave away part to my friends, the rest I kept for myself.

An agreeable present, but not important enough to forestall my just complaint against you for never visiting one who has so long loved you. And be careful lest you have to bear still heavier fungoid growths of grief, for mushrooms have a double significance. Sent as gifts they are pleasant enough, but growths in the body or on the mind are painful. Try to diminish the sorrow I have in your absence; it is my longing for you that causes my distress. Make yourself, if you can, less necessary to me.

I have made my statement, proved my case. I am forced to use that expression as a means to attack you, not an ordinary weapon, but one that will hit home. You certainly showed alarm, but see now that my grief is not so great that I cannot make fun about it. Henceforth, however, you must not excuse yourself, though your present excuse is agreeable enough to me. Yet it were a poor estimate of you, and of me no better, if your absence were to be compensated by presents, or I bought off by a mere mushroom. Farewell; love me as I love you.

CLXVIII. *Saint Ambrose to the Emperor Theodosius, protesting against the massacre at Thessalonica.*<sup>1</sup>

Ambrose, to his Majesty the Emperor Theodosius.

The remembrance of your long friendship is very pleasant to me, and I am deeply grateful for those benevolences which at my frequent request you have most graciously extended to others. You may then be assured that it could not be from any sense of ingratitude that I shunned your presence on your arrival, which I was wont to long for so eagerly. The motives of my conduct I will now briefly explain.

I found that I alone in all your court was denied the natural right of a hearing, and that this was done in order to deprive me of the right also of speaking, for you were often displeased that decisions which were made in your consistory had reached me. Thus the common privilege of men has been denied me, though the Lord Jesus says: "Nothing is secret which shall not be made manifest". Wherefore I have done my utmost to obey, with reverence, your royal will, and I have made arrangements (both for your sake and mine) . . . to forestall causing you any disturbance by endeavouring to prevent any intelligence of the Imperial decrees from reaching my ears. . . .

Suffer me, Gracious Emperor. You have a zeal for the Faith, I admit it; you have the fear of God, I confess it. But you have a vehemence of temper which, if soothed, may readily be changed into compassion, but if inflamed may become so violent that you can scarcely restrain it. If no one will allay it, let no one at least inflame it. To yourself I would willingly trust, for you are wont to exercise self-control, and by your love of mercy to overcome this violence of your nature.

I have preferred to draw your attention to this vehemence of yours in secret, rather than to risk arousing it before the world by my acts. And so I have preferred to be something lacking in duty rather than in humility, and that others should complain of my lack of priestly authority, rather than that you should find me wanting in respect, devoted as I am to you; my purpose is that you may restrain your emotions, and have full

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated.

power of choosing what course to follow. I alleged as my reason bodily sickness, which was severe, and not to be mitigated by more gentle treatment; still, I would rather have died than not have waited two or three days for your arrival. But this I could not do.

A deed has been done at Thessalonica, the like of which is not recorded, the perpetration of which I could not prevent, which in my frequent petitions before the court I had declared to be most atrocious, and which by your tardy revocation you have yourself pronounced to be most heinous; such an act as this I could not extenuate. News of it was first brought to a synod held on the arrival of the Gallic bishops; all present deplored it, no one took a lenient view of it; your friendship with Ambrose, so far from excusing your deed, would have recoiled upon my head with a heavier burden of odium had there been no one to insist that you must be reconciled to God. . . .

I advise, I entreat, I admonish, I exhort. For I am grieved that you who were an example of peculiar piety, who stood so high for clemency that you could not allow even single offenders to be put in jeopardy, should not mourn the death of so many innocent persons. Successful as you have been in battle, and great in other ways, yet mercy was ever the crown of your actions. The devil has envied you your chief excellence; overcome him while yet you may. Add not sin to sin by pursuing a course which has injured so many.

. . . . .  
Lastly, I write with my own hand what I wish you to read by yourself alone. As I hope for deliverance from all tribulation, in the Lord, it has not been through man nor by any agency of man that this has been forbidden me, but by His own manifest interposition. For in the midst of my anxiety, on the very night on which I was about to set out, I saw you in a vision coming into the church, but I was withheld from offering the sacrifice. Other things I pass over, which I might have avoided, but I bore them, I believe, for your sake. May the Lord cause all things to turn out peacefully. Our God gives us divers admonitions, by heavenly signs and prophetic warnings, by visions vouchsafed even to sinners. He wishes us to know that we should

beseech him to remove us from all broils, that he would bestow peace on you our rulers, that the Church, for whose benefit it is that we should have pious Christian Emperors, may continue in peace and tranquillity. . . .

Shall I not value the father of Gratian<sup>1</sup> at more than my own eyes? Your other sacred pledges, too, claim pardon for you. You have my love, my affection, my prayers. If you believe my words, I call on you to act according to them—if, I say, you believe them, give proof of it. If not, excuse my conduct in that I prefer my God to my Sovereign. May your gracious Majesty, with your holy offspring, enjoy in happiness and prosperity a perpetual peace.

CLXIX. *Saint Chrysostom to Euthalia; from Cucusus.*

I have written to you incessantly, most devout lady, but that is not enough, I should like to write to you every day. For you know my feelings for you, my gentle friend. Since, however, this may not be, as often as I can I shall indulge myself by sending you an obligatory greeting, for I am anxious for regular news of your health and prosperity. So please, knowing the pleasure you give me by writing, summon all your energy and write often to me. It was no small grief to me that when the most honourable Libanius, a man well known to everyone, and very dear to me, was coming hither, you sent me nothing by him, perhaps in ignorance of his journey. This especially grieves me that you never even know when anyone is coming from your part of the world to mine. For myself, I shall not cease to trouble and bother everyone travelling from your direction, making use of them to fulfil my own desires—namely, to write continually to your gentle self.

CLXX. *Saint Chrysostom at Cucusus to Chalcedia.*

I know well the love you have borne me always, from the very first, and that you keep it ever fresh, and have even added to it, and not only do not allow it to be obscured by our separa-

<sup>1</sup> A son of Theodosius, who died young. Not the Emperor of the name.

tion, and the long lapse of time, but actually kindle it the more thereby. This also I know, that you receive my letters with joy, and that whether you write to me or no, your feelings never change: of this I have had experience over a long period of years. Wherefore I entreat you, gracious lady, to preserve this regard for me, for I have many pledges and many memories of your affection. Indeed I carry you ever in my thoughts, you are engraved upon my heart, and I hold you in unfading remembrance, even if I do not write frequently, hindered as I am by lack of couriers. Knowing this, most devout and accomplished lady, you must write often, to tell me you are well, for when I do not hear from you, I have to question those who come from your part of the world. I should like to have frequent letters from you, giving me good news of your health.

CLXXI. *Saint Chrysostom at Cucusus to Carteria.*

What do you say, your continued indisposition did not permit you to come to me? But you *are* here, you are with me, I receive your intention, just as if it had been fulfilled, and you have no need to apologise. For the warmth and sincerity of your love affords me sufficient pleasure. However, you have made me not a little anxious by telling me of your illness, so if you are recovered, relieve my mind by letting me know (for God can deliver you from sickness and restore you to sound health). As I have always written you, and repeat now, wherever I am, even if they take me to a yet remoter spot than this, I shall not cease to be anxious about all that concerns you. You have left me such pledges of your warm and true affection as can never fade through separation, nor be dimmed by time. So whether I am near you or far away, I ever preserve the same love, knowing your faithful and sincere heart, which has ever been a benefit to me.

CLXXII. *Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, to Saint Chrysostom.*

I believe you are not ignorant of the rule promulgated at Nicaea, which laid down that no bishop should adjudicate beyond his own province. If you are unaware of it, please make a note



of it, and stop writing depositions to attack me. For if I am to be tried, it will be by the bishops of Egypt in conclave, and not by you, who are seventy days' journey from hence.

CLXXIII. *Saint Nilus to Pegasius, a Count, a wife-beater.*

It is absolutely absurd to beat your wife, so chaste is she, so truly respectable, and has through her whole life loved you and still loves you. Such is her modesty, and her respect towards you, that she dare not lift up her eyes before you. So make an end of beating a faithful wife, lest she become incensed against you. It is a sign of living in accordance with philosophy, to keep the hand from striking, and to smite offenders with the tongue alone. It is a sign of a disordered and uncultivated mind, to be ready with blows for everyone.

CLXXIV. *Saint Jerome to Marcella, apologising for a brief letter.*

There are two reasons for writing you a short letter, first, because the messenger is in a hurry, and second, because I am very busy with other work, and did not wish to spend time on what I must call amusement. You will ask what work this was, so important, so urgent, as to preclude a chat with you on paper. Well, for some time I have been collating Aquila's<sup>1</sup> version with the Hebrew original to see if, by chance, through hatred of Christ, the synagogue has inserted any alterations, and, as I must admit to your affectionate heart, making many discoveries for the confirmation of our Faith. Now, after a complete recension of the Prophets, the book of Solomon, the Psalms, and the books of Kings, I have got to Exodus, which they call *Elle Smoth*, and am about to pass on to Leviticus. So you see that no duty of affection was to be preferred to this. However, lest our good Currentius<sup>2</sup> should run for nothing, I have attached to this poor scrawl two letters which I have written to Paula and to Eustochium, her daughter, so that you can read them and find some

<sup>1</sup> The friend of St. Paul. He translated the Septuagint into Latin, but the version was suspected by the Christians of having been tampered with in the Messianic passages.

<sup>2</sup> Runner.



style and erudition in them, and fancy that what I have written to them I have written to yourself.

My love to your mother Albina, whom I regard also as my own. I hope she is well—in body, I mean; of her soul's health I am in no doubt. I entreat you to give her my love, and to cherish her with the double devotion of piety and love, because you are to love her as a Christian as well as a mother.

CLXXV. *Saint Jerome to Marcella, on the abuse of time.*

Ambrose, whose generous supplies of paper, money and copyists enabled that iron man,<sup>1</sup> that *Robot*, our Origen, to write his innumerable books, records in a letter to Origen from Athens that they never sat down to a meal together without something being read aloud to them, and that they never went to bed without one of the brethren to read the Scriptures aloud. Thus it was both day and night, prayer followed reading, and reading, prayer. Have we ever done the like? Brute beasts that we are, slaves of the flesh. A couple of hours' reading finds us beginning to yawn, we pass a hand over the face, we try to repress our languor, and as if wearied with much toil, betake ourselves again to worldly pursuits.

I pass over those meals which burden and oppress the mind. I am ashamed to mention the habit of morning calls, which day by day we either receive ourselves, or pay to others. The conversation gradually gets under way, becomes a regular gossip, the absent are torn to pieces, other people's lives are discussed, there is mutual rending and devouring till no one has a shred of character left. Such is the meal that regales us. Then when the guests are gone, we make up our accounts, and these are sure to make us either anxious or angry. At one time we are like raging lions, at another we are striving vainly to make provision for years to come, unmindful of the words of the Gospel—"Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee".

Clothing is less for necessity than for elegant display. Wherever our interest lies, our foot is swift, our tongue apt, our ears attent-

<sup>1</sup> Jerome here plays on the name Adamantius, by which, owing to a misunderstanding, Origen was often called. See p. 176, note.

ive. If, as often happens in a household, news comes of some loss, our faces are downcast. The gain of a penny fills us with joy, the loss of a halfpenny with sorrow. Made in God's image, what divers characters, in the corruption of our hearts, do we assume! As in the theatre a single actor can impersonate sometimes a robust Hercules, at others a melting Venus, or a trembling Cybele, so we whom the world would hate if we were not of the world, can play as many rôles as there are sins to commit.

Wherefore, since we have accomplished a large part of our life's voyage, rolled this way and that by the waves, our ship tossed by the storm's whirlwinds, so that it has sprung leaks by striking on the rocks, now that the opportunity is ours for the first time, let us enter into these rural retreats as into a haven. Here rustic dainties, coarse bread, humble but unoffending, salads watered by our own hands, and milk, afford us sustenance. With such a diet sleep does not interrupt prayer, nor over-eating interfere with reading. In summer, a leafy bower will afford shade. In autumn, the very mildness of the air, and a couch spread beneath the boughs, invite repose. In spring-time, flowers enamel the vale, and our pious psalms will rise more sweetly to the accompaniment of the feathered choir. When winter comes with his snows, I shall not purchase fuel; watching or sleeping, I shall be warm, at any rate, I shall not for this be cold.

Let Rome keep her din, the arena its atrocities, the circus its follies, the theatre its revels, and to use a word in favour with our friends, may the House of Ladies<sup>1</sup> hold its daily sessions. For us it is good to cleave unto the Lord, and to place our hope in Him. And one day, when Heaven has transmuted this poverty of ours, we shall declare, "what does Heaven hold for me, and what have I required on earth, save only Thee, O Lord?" When Heaven promises us such good, shall we grieve over the trivial and paltry things of earth?

<sup>1</sup> The "Senatus Matronarum" or "senaculum" was a kind of unofficial court of Mrs. Grundys, who decided questions of good form, dress, and precedence for ladies, what shoes should be worn by certain ranks, whether a lady was entitled to be drawn by oxen or mules, and who should advance to kiss another. It succeeded an older body which dated from the republic, of more confined jurisdiction.

CLXXVI. *Saint Jerome to Pope Damasus I., on the divisions of the Church in Syria, in a time of schism.*

The importunate widow in the Gospels gained a hearing at the last. And by the same means one friend obtained bread from another though it was midnight, when he had shut up his doors and his servants were sleeping. God Himself, whom no power can overcome, was conquered by the prayers of a publican. The city of Nineveh, which was to perish by sin, was saved by tears. But why these far-fetched figures? To the end that you being great, may look on me who am little; that you the rich shepherd may not despise me who am a sick, feeble sheep. Christ brought the robber from the Cross into Paradise: and lest any man should think that this conversion was too late, he made the punishment of his crime to be a martyrdom to him. Joyfully doth Christ embrace the prodigal son when he returns, and leaving the ninety and nine, brings home that one poor sheep upon his shoulder. Paul, the persecutor, is made a preacher, his carnal eyes are blinded, that with his mind he may see the light, and he who carried the servants of Christ bound before the council of the Jews, did glory afterwards, to see himself in bonds for Christ.

I, therefore, who, as I wrote before, received the garment of Christ in the City of Rome, do now remain in the barbarous confines of Syria. No sentence of banishment has been passed upon me by any court of man; my exile is self-inflicted. But as the heathen poets say, "They change not mind but sky, who cross the seas". So hath my incessant enemy followed me, as that now I endure greater assaults in the wilderness.

For here the rage of the Arians, being upheld by the pillars of the world, doth blaze. Here doth the Church, divided into three parts, use all diligence to entangle me in its factions; the ancient authority of the troops of monks which are round about me, rises up against me. But I, in the meantime, cry out, that if any man be ranged with the chair of Peter, that man is mine. Meletius, Vitalis and Paulinus say that they adhere to you. I might believe it, if any one of them did confirm it, but now, either all of them lie, or two, at least.

Therefore I beseech your Holiness, by the Cross of our Lord,

by the Glory of the world, which was crucified, and by the Passion of Christ, that as you follow the Apostles in honour, so you will follow them also in merit. So may you sit on that Throne, to judge with the Twelve; so may there be another, who may gird you like Peter when you are old, so may you become a citizen of Heaven with Paul, as you shall signify to me with your letters with whom I ought to take counsel in Syria. Do not despise this soul, for which Christ died.

CLXXVII. *Pope Innocent I. to Saint Jerome, who had complained of disturbances by Pelagian heretics at Bethlehem.*

Pope Innocent to his most esteemed son, the presbyter Jerome.

The Apostle bears witness that controversy has never done good in the Church, and therefore instructs us that heretics should be rebuked at the beginning of their heresy, and not repeatedly corrected over a long period. Where this rule is neglected the evil to be averted, so far from being checked, is actually intensified.

Your distress and lamentations have so wrung our heart that we are at a loss how to act or advise. In the first place, however, we commend you for the constancy of your faith. You yourself in public utterances have frequently pointed out that a man will gladly face misrepresentation, or even personal danger, on behalf of truth, if he is looking for the bliss that is to come, and we can but recall your own words to you, though we are sure that you need no reminder. The spectacle of these terrible evils has so thoroughly aroused us that we have hastened to exert the authority of the Apostolic See to repress the evil as a whole, but as we find no names mentioned in your letters, nor any specific charges against anyone in particular, there is no one at present against whom we can proceed.

All that we can do is to sympathise deeply with you. And if you will lay a clear and unambiguous charge against any persons in particular, we will appoint suitable judges to try their cases. Or if, our dearly beloved son, you consider that any graver and more urgent action can be taken, we shall not be slow to proceed.

Meantime, we have written to our brother bishop, John,<sup>1</sup> advising him to act more considerately, so that nothing may occur in the Church committed to him, which it is his duty to foresee and prevent, and that nothing may happen which may subsequently prove a source of trouble to him.

CLXXVIII. *Saint Augustine of Hippo to Saint Jerome, whom he feared to have offended by a previous letter.*

Augustine to his beloved and most revered Jerome, his fellow-priest, and most honoured brother in Jesus Christ, greetings in the Lord.

I was informed that my letter had reached you. So far, I have not deserved a reply, but for this I do not hold your Reverence responsible; something has without doubt prevented you. Rather I must perceive that it behoves me to pray to the Lord to grant to your good nature the opportunity of sending me what you shall be pleased to write; for the talent to write well had already been accorded to you; you have only to wish to write, to be able to do so with ease.

I have heard something which I hesitate to believe, but must not hesitate to tell you; you have been told by brethren of some sort, I know not who, that I wrote a pamphlet against you and sent it to Rome. Believe me, before God, I did no such thing. If, by chance, there is any passage anywhere in my writings, in which I shall be found to express opinions different from yours, I think you must realise that it has not been written to attack you, but that I wrote merely what came into my head. If this is not apparent to you, you must believe it. This I will say further, that I shall be more than ready to receive your brotherly observations on any passages of my books that may have aroused you, and that I shall rejoice both in your criticism and in any marks of your approval; in fact, I repeat my entreaties to you, to let me have them.

How I wish I were permitted to live with you, or, if not, at least to be near you, to enjoy frequent and sweet conversation with you in the Lord. But since this joy is denied me, I urge you

<sup>1</sup> Of Jerusalem.

to do all you can to preserve, to increase, to perfect, that union which may be ours in the Lord; not to despise my letters, few though they are. Greet holy brother Paulinianus<sup>1</sup> from me, and all the brethren who rejoice with, and in you, in the Lord. Remember me, and may all your holy desires be fulfilled, dearly beloved and honoured brother in Christ.

CLXXIX. *Saint Jerome to Saint Augustine, in reply to the foregoing.*

Jerome to the most holy and blessed Augustine, greetings in the Lord.

At the very moment of departure of my son in Christ and friend, the sub-deacon Asterius, I received your Reverence's letter, in which you assured me that you did not send a pamphlet against my humble self to Rome. I never heard that you did any such thing, but there did arrive here, by the hand of the sub-deacon Sysinnius, a copy of a certain letter<sup>2</sup> which seemed to be concerned with me. In it you bade me sing a *palinode*, on a passage of the Apostle Paul, and to imitate Stesichorus, alternately reviling and praising Helen, recovering by flattery the eyesight which he had lost by his vituperations.<sup>3</sup>

In my simplicity, I admit to your Reverence, both the style and argument of the letter seemed to me to be yours, yet I was not ready to put credence in a copy of a letter, lest, if I replied to it, you might justly protest that I should have made sure that the letter was yours before replying. The long illness of the holy and venerable Paula delayed my reply; while we were preoccupied with the invalid, I practically forgot your letter—or the letter of him who wrote in your name, but I did not forget the verse in Ecclesiasticus: "As music in a time of mourning, so is unseason-

<sup>1</sup> Saint Jerome's brother.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine in Letter XL (not quoted here) fully justifies this protest. Though opening and closing with flattery, the letter practically accuses Saint Jerome of sharing in the errors of Origen, whose learning he greatly admired. Origen's errors, which included belief in the universal salvation of mankind, did not recommend themselves to Saint Augustine.

<sup>3</sup> Stesichorus, the early Greek lyric poet (c. 600 B.C.) was said to have been punished by blindness for an attack on Helen of Troy. By writing a palinode in her praise, he recovered his sight.



able talk". So, if the letter is yours, write me frankly that it is so, or send me a more exact copy, so that we may discuss the Scriptures without rancour, and that I may correct my errors, or demonstrate that I have been misunderstood.

God forbid that I should presume to lay a finger on anything in your writings. I have enough to do to mind my own without carping at other people's. Besides, your prudence is well aware that each man knows his own business best, and that it is childish insolence, of the sort that precocious young men used to indulge in, to seek notoriety by attacking established reputations. I am not so silly as to think myself injured by any differences between your interpretations and my own; you yourself cannot be offended if we think differently: but as between friends, it is blameworthy, as Persius<sup>1</sup> has pointed out, to rivet our gaze on the next man's shortcomings instead of on our own.

It remains for you to love those who love you, and considering your youth, to refrain from provoking an old man in the field of Scriptural research. I have had my day, I have run as far as I could. Now while you are fleet of foot, and covering long distances, I have earned my rest, and, with due respect and by your leave, if you will allow me, that you may not be alone in quoting poetry at me, I will bid you remember Dares and Entellus,<sup>2</sup> and the vulgar proverb, "that the aged ox plants his feet in all the firmer".

I have dictated this in sadness: God grant that I may be worthy of your embraces, and that in mutual converse we may each both learn and teach.

Calpurnius, surnamed Lanarius, with his usual offensiveness sent me his insults, which I heard had penetrated, by his agency, to Africa. I replied briefly to a part of the attack, and I have sent you a copy of his pamphlet, reserving the right to send you a longer essay when I have more leisure. I have taken care therein not to injure his reputation as a Christian in any way, but merely to confute the lies of his inexperienced folly and unreason. Remember me, holy and reverend father. See how I love you, since, even when provoked, I was unwilling to reply, nor shall I

<sup>1</sup> *Satires* 4. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. V.



readily attribute to you what I would severely censure in anyone else. He who is brother of us both, humbly salutes you.

CLXXX. *Saint Augustine of Hippo to Nebridius, concerning happiness, and the fourth conjugation.*<sup>1</sup>

I am uncertain whether it is in fact true, or whether I should ascribe it to some soft-speaking of yours. Certainly it happened suddenly; I have not sufficiently considered how far I ought to credit what you said. You want to know what I mean—what do you think? You very nearly persuaded me, not that I was happy, for that is reserved only for the wise, but that I had a sort of happiness, rather as one might call an individual a sort of man in comparison with Plato's ideal man, or as we call visible objects round or square, which are far from being round or square according to the judgment of the exact-minded few. I read your letter by lamplight after supper; it was nearly bedtime, but not time to go to sleep. So that I meditated a long time after I was in bed, and these were my inner cogitations, Augustine to Augustine, as it were: "Can it indeed be," I said to myself, "as Nebridius will have it, that I am happy? Certainly not, for even he would not dare to deny that I am still very foolish. But what if happiness were also for the foolish? Scarcely. As if there were a greater, or, indeed, any other misery, than to be without wisdom. Where then does Nebridius get his idea? Can he have dared to think me wise after reading my books? The pleasure of reading could hardly have produced such boldness in a man of whose profound intelligence I am well aware. The reason then is this: he wrote what he thought would give me pleasure, and because something I had written had pleased him, he wrote in his enjoyment omitting to take care what his pen, in the pleasures of the moment, might commit him to. Suppose he had read my Soliloquies. He would have been even more abundantly joyful, and still he would have found no epithet beyond 'happy', to honour me with. He gave me at the outset the highest honour, keeping nothing in hand to give me greater praise. See what joy does. . . .

It is pleasant to write to you like this; I am delighted when

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated.

you thank me for keeping back nothing that comes on to my tongue, and I rejoice that you are so fond of me. To whom can I more readily talk nonsense than to someone who, I know, will not be annoyed with me? And if it is in the power of chance to make one man love another, how much have I to thank mere chance for! I admit that I desire that such good fortune may be abundantly increased to me. Those who are really wise, who alone may be called wise, neither feared, nor desired, the gifts of chance. . . . Now tell me how to conjugate that word *cupio*. Is the passive infinitive *cupi* or *cupiri*? For when I use words of that conjugation I am always in doubt. For *cupio* is like *fugio*, *sapio*, *jacio*, *capio*, but whether the passive infinitives are *fugiri* or *fugi*, *sapiri* or *sapi*, I know not. I might try *jaci* or *capi*, if I were not afraid of being caught and made fun of by somebody who wished to prove that *jactum* and *captum* are one thing, *fugitum*, *cupitum* and *sapitum* another. In the same way I do not know whether the penultimate syllable in the last three verbs should be long and modulated, or short and deep. I shall have provoked you to a longer letter. I entreat you to let me hear from you before long. I cannot tell you what pleasure your letters give me.

CLXXXI. *Augustine to Romanianus, on a shortage of paper, and congratulating him on an access of worldly fortune.*

This letter should not indicate a shortage of paper in such a way as to imply that I have abundance of parchment. My ivory tablets I sent to your uncle with a letter on them. You, however, will readily forgive this bit of skin, for what I had to say to your uncle would not wait, and I thought it foolish not to write to you. But if there are any tablets of mine in your house, I beg you to send them, on account of the shortage here of writing materials. I wrote something about the Catholic Church, in so far as God has permitted me, which I propose to send you before my visit, unless in the meantime I am paperless. You will have to put up with a copy from the local shop. As for the books you mention, except for the *Orator*, they have slipped my mind. But I could not write to you again except to beg you to

take anything you desire, and I continue in that mind. In view of my absence I did not see what more I could do.

I was delighted with your desire that I should share your domestic news in your last letter, but—

Shall I in ocean's guileful calm confide  
And false tranquillity,<sup>1</sup>

although you do not ignore them, nor bid me to. If you have any tranquillity for more serious thought, do not waste such a divine gift. When such things happen, we must not congratulate ourselves, but those by whose agency they befall us. For earthly goods equably, charitably divided, accompanied by peace of mind and calm, can produce everlasting reward, if they do not own us instead of being owned, nor entangle us when they multiply, nor enfold us rather than we them. The word of Truth itself has said, "If ye be not faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

So let us throw off temporal cares and seek for solid and certain happiness. Let us spread our wings above earthly riches. The very abundance of his honey compels the bee to wear wings, for he who sticks in it is lost.

CLXXXII. *Augustine to a bishop, regretting his inability to attend the dedication ceremony of a church.*

Of such importance is the celebration to which your kind brotherhood invites me, that my heart would fain drag my feeble body thither, but that infirmity prevents me. I might come if it were not winter, or I might despise the cold if I were young. For either the heat of youth would temper the chill weather, or the frost of age might yield to summer's heat. But, my dear sir, holy and reverend brother and fellow-priest, I cannot support such a journey now in winter time, with the hoary age I have upon me.

I greet your Excellence with due reverence, and commend my salvation to your prayers. I myself will pray that the dedication of your church may be crowned with prosperity and peace.

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid*, Bk. V.

CLXXXIII. *Synesius to his brother, on the bad taste of their relatives.*  
(Translated by Augustine FitzGerald.)

Aeschines had already been interred three days when his niece came to visit his tomb for the first time. Custom, you know, does not permit girls to attend funerals once they are engaged to be married. However, even then she was dressed in purple, with a diaphanous veil over her hair, and she had decked herself with gold and precious stones that she might not be a sign of evil omen to her betrothed. Seated upon a chair with double cushions and silver feet, so they say, she railed against the untimeliness of the misfortune, on the ground that Aeschines should have died either before her wedding or after it, and she was angry with us because we were in grief. Scarcely waiting for the seventh day, on which we had met for the funeral banquet, she mounted her mule cart, in company with that talkative old nurse of hers, and when the forum was thronged, set out on her stately course for Teucheira with all her adornments.

Next week she is preparing to display herself crowned with fillets, and with a towering head-dress like Cybele.

We are in no way wronged by this, except in the fact, patent to the whole world, that we have relations with very bad taste. The one who has been wronged is Harmonius, the father of her janitor, as Sappho might say, a man who although wise and moderate in all respects in his own life, vied with Cecrops himself on the ground of noble birth. The granddaughter of this man, himself greater than Cecrops, her uncle and janitor, Herodes has now given away to the Sosii and Tibii. Perchance they are right who extol the bridegroom elect to us because of his mother, pointing to his descent from the famous Laïs. Now Laïs was a slave bought from Sicily, according to one historian; whence this mother of fair offspring who bore the famous man. She of old lived an irregular life with a shipmaster for her owner—afterwards with an orator, who also owned her, and after these in the third instance with a fellow-slave, at first secretly in the town, then conspicuously, and was a mistress of her art. When by reason of oncoming wrinkles she gave up the practice

of her art, she trained in her calling young persons whom she palmed off on strangers. Her son, the orator, asserts that he is dispensed by law from the duty of supporting a mother who is beyond the pale. Out upon such a law! The mother has been clearly revealed to those thus born; it is only the other parent who is doubtful. All the care that is due to parents from those born in wedlock should be bestowed by the fatherless on the mother alone.

CLXXXIV. *Synesius to his brother, on the fallen state of Athens in the fourth century. (Translated by Augustine FitzGerald.)*

I hope that I may profit as much as you desire from my residence at Athens. It seems to me that I have already grown more than a palm or a finger's length in wisdom, and I can give you at once a proof of the progress I have made. Well, it is from Anagyrus that I am writing to you, and I have visited Sphettus, Thria, Cephisia and Phalerum. But may the accursed ship-captain perish who brought me here! Athens has no longer anything sublime except the country's famous names. Just as in the case of a victim burnt in the sacrificial fire, there remains nothing but the skin to help us to reconstruct a creature which was once alive—so ever since philosophy left these precincts, there is nothing for the tourist to admire except the Academy, the Lyceum, and, by Zeus, the Decorated Portico, which has given its name to the philosophy of Chrysippus. This no longer is decorated, for the proconsul has taken away the panels on which Polygnotus of Thasos had displayed his skill.

To-day Egypt has received and cherishes the fruitful wisdom of Hypatia. Athens was aforetime the dwelling-place of the wise: to-day the bee-keepers alone bring it honour. Such is the case of that pair of sophists in Plutarch who draw the young people to the lecture-room—not by the fame of their eloquence, but by pots of honey from Hymettus.

CXXXV. *Synesius to his brother, concerning their summer clothes. (Translated by Augustine FitzGerald.)*

They say that a fellow who sells boots has come from Athens. It is the same person, I think, from whom you bought for me last

year some laced shoes. Now, according to my information, he has extended the area of his trade; he has robes in the Attic style, he has light summer clothes which will become you, and mantles such as I like for the summer season. Before he sells all these goods, or, at least, the finest of them, invite the stranger here, for you must remember that the first purchaser will choose the best of everything, without troubling himself about those who come to buy after him, and buy for me three or four of these mantles. In any case, whatever you pay, I will repay you ten times over.

CLXXXVI. *Synesius to Uranius, on presenting him with a horse.*  
(Translated by Augustine FitzGerald.)

I have just sent you a present, a horse most perfect in every quality that befits a horse. You will find him useful for racing as well as for hunting and warfare, and when you lead a triumphal procession in honour of the Libyan victory. I do not know for what purpose he is most valuable, whether for hunting or for contests in the hippodrome, or again, whether for parade or for actual warfare. If he is less beautiful than the horses of Nesa, if he is heavy in the head and too thin about the flanks, perhaps God does not give all points together to horses any more than to men. After all, perhaps it is an additional good quality in his case that the soft parts of the body are less developed by nature than the hard. Bones I know are more equal to toil than flesh is. Your horses are heavier in flesh, ours in bone.

CLXXXVII. *Synesius to the philosopher Hypatia, reproaching her for her silence.* (Translated by Augustine FitzGerald.)

I salute you, and I beg of you to salute your most happy comrades for me, august Mistress. I have long been reproaching you that I am not deemed worthy of a letter, but now I know that I am despised by you all for no wrongdoing on my part, but because I am unfortunate in many things, in as many as a man can be. If I could only have had letters from you and learnt how you are all faring—I am sure you are happy and enjoying good fortune—I should have been relieved, in that case, of half my



own trouble, in rejoicing at your happiness. But now silence has been added to the sum of my sorrows. I have lost my children, my friends, and the goodwill of everyone. The greatest loss of all, however, is the absence of your divine spirit. I had hoped that this would always remain to me, to conquer both the caprices of fortune and the evil turns of fate.

CLXXXVIII. *Synesius to Hypatia, requesting her to send him a hydroscope. (Translated by Augustine FitzGerald.)*

I am in such evil fortune that I need a hydroscope. See that one is cast in brass for me, and put together. The instrument in question is a cylindrical tube, which has the shape of a flute and is about the same size. It has notches in a perpendicular line, by means of which we are able to test the weight of the waters. A cone forms a lid at one of the extremities, closely fitted to the tube. The cone and tube have one base only. This is called the baryllium. Wherever you place the tube in water, it remains erect. You can then count the notches at your ease, and in this way ascertain the weight of the water.

CLXXXIX. *A reluctant bishop. Synesius to his brother, on accepting the bishopric of Ptolemais. (Translated by Augustine FitzGerald.)*

I should be altogether lacking in sense if I did not show myself very grateful to the inhabitants of Ptolemais, who consider me worthy of an honour to which I should never have dared to aspire. At the same time I ought to examine, not the importance of the duties which they desire to entrust to me, but my own capacity to fulfil them. For one that is but common clay, to behold himself called to a vocation almost divine, is a matter of great joy, if he truly deserve it. If, on the other hand, he be most unworthy, the future is but dark. This fear in me is by no means new, rather, of long standing, that I should win honour from men at the price of sinning against God.

When I examine myself, I fail to find the strength needful to raise me to the sanctity of such a priesthood as this. I will now



tell you of the emotions of my soul: for to no one can I rather speak than to you who are so dear to me, and have been brought up with me. It is quite natural that you should share my anxieties, that you should watch with me by night, and that by day we should seek together whatever may bring me joy, or turn away sorrow from me. Let me then tell you how I am situated, although you know beforehand most of what I am about to say.

I took up a light burden, and till this moment I think that I have borne it well. It is, in a word, philosophy. Inasmuch as I have never fallen short of the duties it imposed upon me, I have been praised for my work. And I am regarded as capable of yet better things, by those who do not well estimate the direction of my talents. Now, if I frivolously accept the dignity of the position which has been offered to me, I fear that I may fail in both causes, slighting the one, without at the same time attaining the high level of the other. Consider my situation. All my days are divided between study and recreation. In my hours of work, above all, when I am occupied with divine matters, I withdraw into myself. In my leisure hours I give myself up to my friends. For you know, that when I look up from my books I like to enter into every form of sport. I have no part in the political turn of mind, either by nature, or in my pursuits.

But the priest should be a man above human weaknesses. He should be a stranger to every diversion, even as God Himself. All eyes keep watch upon him to see that he fulfils his mission. He is of little use or none, unless he has made himself austere, unyielding to any form of pleasure. In carrying out his holy office, he should belong to himself no more, but to all men. He is a teacher of the law, and should utter that which is approved by law. Over and above all this, he has as many calls upon him as all the rest of the world put together, for he alone must attend to the affairs of all, or incur the reproaches of all. Now, unless he has a great and noble soul, how can he sustain the weight of so many cares, without his intellect being submerged? How can he keep the divine flame alive within him when such varied duties claim him on every side? I know well that there are such men, I have every admiration for their character, and I regard them as really divine whom intercourse with man's affairs does not separate

from God. But I know myself also. I go down to the town, and from the town I come up again, always enveloped in thoughts that drag me down to earth, and covered with more stains than anybody could imagine. In ■ word, I have so many personal defilements of old date, that the slightest addition fills up my measure. My strength fails me. I have no strength, and there is no health in me. I am not equal to confronting what is without me, and within, I am far from being able to bear the distress of my own conscience. If anybody asks me what my idea of a bishop is, I have no hesitation in saying explicitly that he ought to be spotless, more than spotless, in all things; he to whom is allotted the purification of others.

In writing to you, my brother, I have still another thing to say. You will not be by any means the only one to read this letter. In addressing it to you I wish above all things to make known to everyone what I feel, so that whatever happens hereafter, no one will have a right to accuse me before God, or before man, nor above all, before the venerable Theophilus.<sup>1</sup> In publishing my thoughts, and in giving myself up entirely to his decision, how can I be in the wrong? God Himself, the law of the land, and the blessed hand of Theophilus himself gave me a wife. I, therefore, proclaim to all, and call them to witness once for all, that I will not be separated from her, nor shall I associate with her in secret, like an adulterer; for of these two acts, one is impious, the other is unlawful. I shall desire and pray to have many virtuous children. This is what I must inform the man upon whom depends my consecration. Let him learn from his comrades, Paul and Dionysius, for I understand they have become his deputies by the will of the people.

There is one point, however, which is not new to Theophilus, but of which I must remind him. I must press my point here a little more, for beside his difficulty, all the others are as nothing. It is difficult, if not impossible, that convictions should be shaken, which have entered the soul through knowledge to the point of demonstration. Now you know that philosophy rejects many of those convictions which are cherished by the common people. For my own part, I can never persuade myself

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Alexandria.

that the soul is of more recent origin than the body. Never would I admit that the world and the parts that make it up, must perish. This resurrection, which is an object of common belief, is nothing for me but a sacred and mysterious allegory, and I am far from sharing the views of the vulgar crowd thereon. The philosophic mind, albeit the discerner of truth, admits the employment of falsehood, for light is to truth what the eye is to the mind. Just as the eye would be injured by excess of light, and just as darkness is more helpful to those of weak eyesight, even so do I consider that the false may be beneficial to the populace, and the truth injurious to those not strong enough to gaze steadfastly on the radiance of Reality. If the laws of the priesthood current with us permit me these views, I can undertake the holy office on condition that I may prosecute philosophy at home, and publish legends abroad, so that if I teach no doctrine, at all events, I undo no teaching, and allow men to remain in their already acquired convictions. But if anybody tells me that he must be under this influence, that the bishop must belong to the people in his convictions, then I shall betray myself very quickly. What can there be in common between the ordinary man and philosophy? Divine truth should remain hidden, but the vulgar need a different system. I shall never cease repeating that I think the wise man, as far as necessity allows him, should not force his opinions upon others, nor allow others to force theirs upon him.

No, if I am called to the priesthood, I declare before God and man that I refuse to preach dogmas in which I do not believe. Truth is an attribute of God, and I wish in all things to be blameless before him. This one thing I will not dissimulate, I feel that I have a good deal of inclination for amusements. Even as a child I was charged with a mania for arms and horses. I shall be grieved, indeed greatly shall I suffer at seeing my beloved dogs deprived of their hunting, and my bow eaten up by worms. Nevertheless, I shall resign myself to this, if it is the will of God. Again, I hate all care; nevertheless, whatever it costs, I will endure lawsuits and quarrels so long as I can fulfil this mission, heavy though it be, according to God's will; but never will I consent to conceal my beliefs, nor shall my opinions be at war with my tongue. I believe that I am pleasing God in thinking

and speaking thus. I do not wish to give anyone the opportunity of saying that I, an unknown man, grasped at the appointment. But let the beloved of God, the right reverend Theophilus,<sup>1</sup> knowing the situation and giving me clear evidence that he understands it, decide on this issue concerning me. He will then either leave me by myself to lead my own life—to philosophise, or he will not leave any grounds on which hereafter to sit in judgment over me, and to turn me out of the priesthood. In comparison with these truths, every opinion is insignificant, for I know well that Truth is dearest to God. I swear it by your sacred head, nay, better still, I swear by God, the guardian of Truth, that I suffer. How can I fail to suffer, when I must, as it were, remove from one life to another? But if after that has been made clear which I least desire to conceal, if the man who holds this power from Heaven insists in putting me in the hierarchy of bishops, I will submit to the inevitable, and accept the token as divine. For I reason thus, that if the Emperor, or some ill-fated Augustal had given an order, I should have been punished if I disobeyed, but that God must be obeyed with a willing heart. But even at the cost of God's not admitting me to His service, I must place first my love of Truth, the most divine thing of all. And I must not slip into His service through ways most opposed to it—through falsehood. See, then, that the scholastics know well my sentiments, and that they inform Theophilus.

cxc. *Saint Isidore of Pelusium reproves a priest.*

Isidore to Peter.

Do not, my friend, fence with shadows, nor by stirring up strife over trifles, injure yourself in matters of moment. Do not imitate those who swallow a camel and strain at a gnat.

cxci. *From Firmus, Bishop of Caesarea, to Inachius.*

Our own time has its Helen of Lacedaemon, a face that well might launch a thousand ships, and burn the topless towers of

<sup>1</sup> Literally: God-beloved.

Ilium. But having enjoyed her beauty for a little while, I was often on the verge of sending her to you, just as the Trojans used to discuss sending Helen away.<sup>1</sup> Actually I have had to fight a longer war than they did, for the intense desire which her beauty inspired has caused me trouble and bother, and has allowed me not the briefest truce, not a moment's cessation of hostilities. Such is the violent love with which she inflames everyone. And naturally. For her loveliness surpasses everything, so fair is she of form, so mettlesome, so fleet of foot, the hares everywhere collapse in a common paralysis of fear, as often as they hear that the panoply of Helen is taking the field against them. From this fear I have now freed my little neighbours in the hills, if any indeed are left, and have succeeded in eluding her fleet pursuit. You, who are regarded by all as the height of piety, give her all the admiration you are capable of, for even if accorded with all your might, it will be small in comparison with her merits. And commend him who sent her in those kind, simple, brief and pithy phrases which alone constitute good writing and speaking.

I have some fear, however, lest the hares in your part of the world may take fright and flee, when they hear she is coming, for they are expert malefactors, and possessed of some sort of faculty of gathering by their senses from the very breezes, that plans are afoot against them. To prevent this, and to ruin the success of their efforts, her onslaught must be timed to forestall them. Thus they will blame me for causing their ruin, and admire you for such a wonderful possession.

CXCII. *Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrus,<sup>2</sup> to a friend, on the wine of Lesbos.*

I had heard of the Isle of Lesbos, and of its cities Mitylene, Methymna, and others, but I was ignorant of the grape that grows there. Now, however, thanks to the trouble you have taken, I have discovered it and admire its light colour, and delicate flavour. Possibly it might become smoother with keeping, unless age would sour it. For wine, like creatures, plants,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Horace Walpole, to Richard Bentley, Esq., Feb. 8th, 1755: "A lady whom you must call Phillis, but whom George Montagu and the gods would name speckle-belly".

<sup>2</sup> In Syria.



and like houses too, and other things made with hands, deteriorates with time. It would, however, be of no use to me, if it makes the drinker long-lived, for I have no ambition for a long life, since life is so beset with tempests.

I am delighted to hear that the monk, our friend, is better; I was indeed anxious about him, and I blamed his doctors, quite unjustly, for their treatment was precisely what his trouble required.

I have sent you a pot of honey stripped from storax flowers by Cilician bees.

CXCIII. *Sidonius to his friend Candidianus, giving his opinion of Ravenna. (Translated by O. M. Dalton.)*

You congratulate me on my prolonged stay at Rome, though I note the touch of irony, and your wit at my expense. You say you are glad that your old friend has at last seen the sun, since on the Saône his chances of a good look at it are few and far between. You abuse my misty Lyons, and deplore the days so cloaked by morning fog that the full heat of noon can scarcely unveil them. Now does this nonsense come fitly from a native of that oven of a town Cesena? You have shown your real opinion of your charming and convenient native soil by leaving it. The midges of Po may pierce your ears, the city frogs may croak and swarm on every side; but you know quite well that you are better off in exile at Ravenna than at home. In that marsh of yours the laws of everything are always the wrong way about; the waters stand and the walls fall down, the towers float and the ships stick fast, the sick man walks and the doctor lies abed, the baths are chill and the houses blaze, the dead swim and the quick are dry, the powers are asleep and the thieves wide awake, the clergy live by usury, and the Syrian chants the psalms, business men turn soldiers, and soldiers business men, old fellows play ball, and young fellows hazard, eunuchs take to arms, and rough allies to letters. And that is the kind of a city you choose to settle in, a place that may boast a territory, but little solid ground. Be kinder, therefore, to transalpines who never provoked you; their climate wins too cheap a victory if it shines only by comparison with such as yours. Farewell.

CXCIV. *A country-house party. To his friend, Donidius. (Translated by O. M. Dalton.)*

To your question why, having got as far as Nîmes, I still leave your hospitality expectant, I reply by giving the reason for my delayed return. I will even dilate upon the causes of my dilatoriness, for I know that what I enjoy is your enjoyment too. The fact is, I have passed the most delightful time in the most beautiful country in the company of Tonantius Ferreolus and Apollinaris. The most charming hosts in the world. Their estates march together; their houses are not far apart; and the extent of intervening ground is just too far for a walk and just too short to make the ride worth while. The hills above the houses are under vines and olives; they might be Nysa and Aracynthus, famed in song. The view from one villa is over a wide flat country, that from the other over woodland; yet different though their situations are, the eye derives equal pleasure from both. But enough of sites; I have now to unfold the order of my entertainment.

Sharp scouts were posted to look out for our return; and not only were the roads patrolled by men from each estate, but even winding short-cuts and sheep-tracks were under observation, to make it quite impossible for us to elude the friendly ambush. Into this, of course, we fell, no unwilling prisoners; and our captors instantly made us swear to dismiss every idea of continuing our journey until a whole week had elapsed. And so every morning began with a flattering rivalry between the two hosts, as to which of their kitchens should first smoke for the refreshment of their guest; nor though I am personally related to one, and connected through my relatives with another, could I manage by alternation to give them quite equal measure, since age and dignity of praetorian rank gave Ferreolus a prior right of invitation over and above his other claims.

From the first moment we were hurried from one pleasure to another. Hardly had we entered the vestibule of either house when we saw two opposite pairs of partners in the ball game, repeating each other's movements as they turned in wheeling circles; in another place one heard the rattle of dice-boxes and



the shouts of contending players; in yet another, were books in abundance ready to your hand; you might have imagined yourself among the shelves of some grammarian, or the tiers of the Athenaeum, or a bookseller's towering cases. They were so arranged that the devotional works were near the ladies' seats; where the master sat were those ennobled by the great style of Roman eloquence. The arrangement had this defect, that it separated certain books by certain authors in manner as near to each other as in matter they are far apart. Thus, Augustine writes like Varro, and Horace like Prudentius; but you had to consult them on different sides of the room. Turrianus Rufinus' interpretation of Adamantius<sup>1</sup>-Origen was eagerly examined by the readers of theology among us; according to our different points of view we had different reasons to give for the censure of this Father by certain of the clergy as too trenchant a controversialist and best avoided by the prudent. But the translation is so literal and yet renders the spirit of the work so well that neither Apuleius' version of Plato's *Phaedo* nor Cicero's of the *Ctesiphon* of Demosthenes is more admirably adapted to the use and rule of our Latin tongue.

While we were engaged in these discussions as fancy prompted each, appears an envoy from the cook to warn us that the hour of bodily refreshment is at hand. And, in fact, the fifth hour had just elapsed, proving that the man was punctual, and had properly marked the advance of the hours upon the water-clock. The dinner was short, but abundant, served in the fashion affected in senatorial houses where inveterate usage prescribes numerous courses of very few dishes, though, to afford variety, roast alternated with stew. Amusing and instructive anecdotes accompanied our potations; wit went with the one sort, learning with the other. To be brief, we were entertained with decorum, refinement and good cheer. After dinner, if we were at Vorocingus (the name of one estate), we walked over to our quarters and our own belongings. If at Prusianum, as the other is called, (the young) Tonantius and his brother turned

<sup>1</sup> Adamantius was a person in a dialogue on the True Faith, supposed by Rufinus to be by Origen, now no longer thought to be so. St. Jerome, who was Rufinus' friend, thought the same. See Letter CLXXV.

out of their beds for us because we could not be always dragging our gear about: they are surely the elect among the nobles of our own age.

The siesta over, we took a short ride to sharpen our jaded appetites for supper. Both of our hosts had baths in their houses, but in neither did they happen to be available; so I set my servants to work in the rare sober intervals which the convivial bowl, too often filled, allowed their sodden brains. I made them dig a pit at their best speed near a spring, or by the river; into this a heap of red-hot stones was thrown, and the glowing cavity covered over with an arched roof of wattled hazel. This still left interstices, and to exclude the light and keep in the steam given off when water was thrown on the hot stones, we laid coverings of Cilician goats' hair over all. In these vapour baths we passed whole hours with lively talk and repartee; all the time the cloud of hissing steam enveloping us induced the healthiest perspiration.

When we had perspired enough we were bathed in hot water; the treatment removed the feeling of repletion, but left us languid; we therefore finished off with a bracing douche from fountain, well or river. For the River Gardon runs between the two properties; except in time of flood, when the stream is swollen and clouded with melted snow, it looks red through its tawny gravels, and flows still and pellucid over its pebbly bed, teeming none the less with the most delicate fish. I could tell you of suppers fit for a king; it is not my sense of shame, but simply want of space which sets a limit to my revelations. You would have a great story if I turned the page and continued on the other side; but I am always ashamed to disfigure the back of a letter with an inky pen. Besides, I am on the point of leaving here, and hope, by Christ's grace, that we shall meet very shortly; the story of my friends' banquets will be better told at my own table or at yours—provided only that a good week's interval elapses to restore me the healthy appetite I long for. There is nothing like thin living to give tone to a system disordered by excess. Farewell.

CXCV. *Sidonius to his friend Attalus, who had been appointed Count of Autun. (Translated by O. M. Dalton.)*

I was delighted to hear that you have consented to preside over the destinies of Autun. I am glad for several reasons, first, you are my friend; second, you are a just man; third, you are not to be trifled with; fourth, you will be quite near us. You will have not only the inclination to help our people and further their affairs, but the duty and power of doing so. In my satisfaction at seeing an old acquaintance invested with a new authority, I am already looking round for objects on which you may exercise your benevolence. For, understand, I feel so sure of it, that if I fail to find anything to ask for, I shall expect you to make me a suggestion yourself. Farewell.

CXCVI. *A description of Theodoric, King of the Visigoths. Sidonius to his brother-in-law Agricola. (Translated by T. Hodgkin.)*

You have often begged a description of Theodoric,<sup>1</sup> the Gothic king, whose gentle breeding fame commends to every nation; you want him in his quantity and quality, in his person, and the manner of his existence. I gladly accede, as far as the limits of my page allow, and highly approve so fine and ingenuous a curiosity.

Well, he is a man worth knowing, even by those who cannot enjoy his close acquaintance, so happily have Providence and Nature joined to endow him with the perfect gifts of fortune; his way of life is such that not even the envy which lies in wait for kings can rob him of his proper praise. And first, as to his person. He is well set up, in height above the average man, but below the giant. His head is round, with curled hair retreating somewhat from brow to crown. His nervous neck is free from disfiguring knots. The eyebrows are bushy and arched; when the lids droop, the lashes reach almost half-way down the cheeks. The upper ears are buried in overlying locks, after the manner of his race. The nose is finely aquiline; the lips are thin, and not enlarged by undue distension of the mouth. Every day the hair

<sup>1</sup> Theodoric II, successor to Thorismund, predecessor of Euric.

springing from his nostrils is cut back; that on the face springs thick from the hollow of the temples, but the razor has not yet come upon his cheek, and his barber is assiduous in eradicating the rich growth on the lower part of the face. Chin, throat and neck are full, but not fat, and all of fair complexion; seen close, their colour is as fresh as that of youth; they often flush, but from modesty, not from anger. His shoulders are smooth, the upper and fore arms strong and hard; hands broad, chest prominent, waist receding. The spine dividing the broad expanse of back does not project, and you can see the spring of the ribs; the sides swell with salient muscle, the well-girt flanks are full of vigour. His thighs are like hard horn; the knee-joints firm and masculine; the knees themselves the comeliest and least wrinkled in the world. A full ankle supports the leg, and the foot is small to bear such mighty limbs.

Now for the romance of his public life. Before daybreak he goes with a very small suite to attend the service of his priests. He prays with assiduity, but if I may speak in confidence, one may suspect more of habit than conviction in this piety. Administrative duties of the kingdom take up the rest of the morning. Armed nobles stand about the royal seat; the mass of guards in their garb of skin are admitted that they may be within call, but kept at the threshold for quiet's sake; only a murmur of them comes in from their post at the doors, between the curtain and the outer barrier. And now the foreign envoys are introduced. The king hears them and says little; if a thing needs more discussion he puts it off, but accelerates matters ripe for dispatch. The second hour arrives; he rises from the throne to inspect his treasure chamber or stable. If the chase is the order of the day, he joins it, but never carries his bow at his side, considering this derogatory to royal state. When a bird or a beast is marked for him, or happens to cross his path, he puts his hand behind his back and takes his bow from a page with the string all hanging loose; for as he deems it a boy's trick to bear it in a quiver, so he holds it effeminate to receive the weapon ready strung. When it is given to him he sometimes holds it in both hands, and bends the extremities towards each other; at others he sets it, knot end downward, against his lifted heel, and runs his finger up the

slack and wavering string. After that he takes his arrows, adjusts and lets fly. He will ask you beforehand what you would like him to transfix; you choose, and he hits. If there is a miss through either's error, your vision will mostly be at fault and not the archer's skill.

On ordinary days his table resembles that of a private person. The board does not groan beneath a mass of dull and unpolished silver set on by panting servitors; the weight lies rather in the conversation than in the plate; there is either sensible talk or none. The hangings and draperies used on these occasions are sometimes of purple silk, sometimes only of linen; art, not costliness commends the fare, as spotlessness rather than bulk the silver. Toasts are few, and you will oftener see a thirsty guest impatient than a full one refusing cup or bowl. In short, you will find elegance of Greece, good cheer of Gaul, Italian nimbleness, the state of public banquets with the attentive service of a private table, and everywhere the discipline of a king's house. What need for me to describe the pomp of his feast days? No man is so unknown as not to know of them. But to my theme again. The siesta after dinner is always slight, and sometimes intermitted. When inclined for the board game, he is quick to gather up the dice, examines them with care, shakes the box with expert hand, throws rapidly, humorously apostrophises them, and patiently waits the issue. Silent at a good throw, he makes merry over a bad, annoyed by neither fortune, and always the philosopher. He is too proud to ask or to refuse a revenge, he disdains to avail himself of one if offered; and if it is opposed, will quietly go on playing. You effect recovery of your men without obstruction on his side; he recovers his without collusion on yours. You see the strategist when he moves the pieces; his one thought is victory. Yet at play he puts off a little of his kingly rigour, inciting all to good fellowship and the freedom of the game: I think he is afraid of being feared. Vexation in the man whom he beats delights him; he will never believe that his opponents have not let him win unless their annoyance proves him really victor. You would be surprised how often the pleasure born of these little happenings may favour the march of great affairs. Petitions that some wrecked influence had left derelict come unexpectedly to



port; I myself am gladly beaten by him when I have a favour to ask, since the loss of my game may mean the gaining of my cause.

About the ninth hour, the burden of government begins again. Back come the importunates, back the ushers to remove them; on all sides buzz the voices of petitioners, a sound which lasts till evening, and does not diminish till interrupted by the royal repast; even then they only disperse to attend their various patrons among the courtiers, and are astir till bedtime. Sometimes, though this is rare, supper is enlivened by sallies of mimes, but no guest is ever exposed to the wound of a biting tongue. Withal there is no noise of hydraulic organ, or choir with its conductor intoning a set piece; you will hear no players of lyre or flute, no master of the music, no girls with cithara or tabor; the king cares for no strains but those which no less charm the mind with virtue than the ear with melody. When he rises to withdraw, the treasury watch begins its vigil; armed sentries stand on guard during the first hours of slumber. But I am wandering from my subject. I never promised a whole chapter on the kingdom, but a few words about the king. I must stay my pen; you asked for nothing more than one or two facts about the person and tastes of Theodoric; and my own aim was to write a letter, not a history. Farewell.

CXCVII. *On contradictory prayers.* (Translated by O. M. Dalton.)

Sidonius to his friend Aper. Are you taking your ease in your sunny Baiae, where the sulphurous water rushes from the hollows of the porous rock, and the baths are so beneficial to those who suffer either in the lungs or liver? Or are you "camped among the mountain castles", looking for a place of refuge, and perhaps embarrassed by the number of strongholds you find to choose from? Whatever the cause of your delay, whether you are making holiday or going about your business, I feel sure that the thought of the forthcoming Rogations will bring you back to town. It was Mamertus, our father in God and bishop, who first designed, arranged and introduced the ceremonial of these prayers. We had public prayers of a sort before, but (be it said without offence to



the faithful), they were lukewarm, irregular, perfunctory, and their fervour was destroyed by frequent interruption for refreshment; and as they were chiefly for rain or fine weather, to say the least of it, the potter and the market gardener could never decently attend together! But in the Rogations which our holy father has instituted and conferred upon us, we fast, we pray with tears, we chant the psalms. To such a feast, where penitential sighs are heard from all the congregation, where heads are humbly bowed, and forms fall prostrate, I invite you; and if I rightly gauge your spirit, you will only respond the quicker because you are called in place of banquets to a festival of tears. Farewell.

CXCVIII. *A prodigal's return. Sidonius to the Lord Bishop Ambrose.*  
(Translated by O. M. Dalton.)

Your holiness has interceded before Christ with effect on behalf of our well-beloved friend (I will not mention his name—you will know whom I mean), the laxity of whose youth you used sometimes to lament before a few chosen witnesses of your sorrow, sometimes to bemoan in silence and alone. For he has suddenly broken off his relations with the shameless slave-girl to whose low fascination he had utterly abandoned his life; by this prompt reformation he has taken a great step in the interests of his estate, of his descendants, and of himself. He dissipated his inheritance until his coffers were empty; but when he once began to consider his position, and understood how much of his patrimony the extravagance of his domestic Charybdis had swallowed up, not a moment too soon he took the bit in his teeth, shook his head, and stopping his ears, as one might say, with Ulysses' wax, he was deaf to the voice of evil, and escaped the shipwreck that follows meretricious lures. He has led to the altar a maid of high birth and ample fortune, and for that we must give him credit. It would, of course, have been a greater glory to have abandoned the voluptuous life without taking to himself a wife; but few of those who forsake error at the call of virtue can begin on the highest level, and after indulging themselves with everything, cut off all indulgence at one stroke.

It is now your part by assiduous prayer to obtain for the newly married couple good hope of issue; and then, when they have one or two children (perhaps even in that we concede too much), to see to it that this stealer of unlawful joys shall abstain thereafter even from lawful pleasures. At present, the conduct of this bride and bridegroom is so seemly that to see them once together is enough to reveal the gulf between the honourable love of a wife, and the feigned endearments of the concubine. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

CXCIX. *Sidonius to the Lord Bishop Eleutherius, introducing a Jew.*  
(Translated by O. M. Dalton.)

I herewith commend a Jew to you, not because I approve a sect pernicious to those involved in its toils, but because we ought to regard none of that creed as wholly lost so long as life remains to them. For while there is any possibility of converting them, there's always hope of their redemption. The nature of his business will be best explained by himself when admitted to your presence; for it would be imprudent to allow discursive talk to exceed the brevity proper to a letter. In the transactions and disputes of this present world, a Jew has often as good a cause as anyone; however much you may attack his heresy, you can fairly defend him as a man. Deign to hold us in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

CC. *A religious fête at Lyons. Sidonius to his friend Eriphius.*  
(Translated by O. M. Dalton.)

You are the same man still, my dear Eriphius; the pleasures of the chase, the amenities of town or country are never allowed to lure you so far that in your hour the charm of letters will not win you back. That devotion it is which bids you tolerate even me, whom you are good enough to describe as redolent of the Muses. If you were in a frivolous mood when you wrote so, you jest at my expense; if in sober earnest your regard for me has blinded your eyes, for it needs no demonstration to prove your judgment at fault. Really you go much too far when you use of me expressions hardly appropriate to a Homer or a Virgil. I

leave these kindly exaggerations and pass to the proper subject of my letter.

We had assembled at the tomb of S. Justus; the annual procession before daylight was over, attended by a vast crowd of both sexes which even that great church could not hold with all its cincture of galleries. After Vigils were ended, chanted alternately by the monks and clerics, the congregation separated; we could not go far off as we had to be at hand for the next service at Tierce, when the priests were to celebrate the Mass. We felt oppressed by the crowding in a confined space, and by the great number of lights which had been brought in. It was still almost summer, and the night was so sultry that it suffocated us, imprisoned as we were in that steaming atmosphere; only the first freshness of the dawn brought some welcome relief. Groups of the different classes dispersed in various directions, the principal citizens assembling at the monument of Syagrius, which is hardly a bowshot from the church. Some of us sat down under an old vine, the stems of which were trained trellis-wise and covered with leaves and drooping sprays; others sat on the grass odorous with the scent of flowers. The talk was enlivened with amusing jests and pleasantries; above all (and what a blessed thing it was!), there was not a word about officials or taxes, not an informer among us to betray, not a syllable worth betrayal. Everyone was free to tell any story worth relating and of a proper tenor; it was a most appreciative audience; the vein of gaiety was not allowed to spoil the distinct relation of each tale.

After a time we felt a certain slackness through keeping still so long, and we voted for some more active amusement. We soon split into two groups, according to our ages; one shouted for the ball, the other for the board game, both of which were to be had. I was the leader of the ball-players; you know that book and ball are my twin companions. In the other group, the chief figure was our brother Domnicus, the most engaging and attractive of men: there he was, rattling some dice he had got hold of, as if he sounded a trumpet-call to play. The rest of us had a great game with a party of students, doing our best at the healthful exercise with limbs which sedentary occupations made much too stiff for running. And now the illustrious Filimatus sturdily flung

himself into the squadrons of the players, like Virgil's hero, "daring to set his hand to the task of youth"; he had been a splendid player himself in his younger years. But over and over again he was forced from his position among the stationary players by the shock of some runner from the middle, and driven into the midfield where the ball flew past him, or was thrown over his head, and he failed to intercept or parry it. More than once he fell prone, and had to pick himself up from such collapses as best he could; naturally he was the first to withdraw from the stress of the game in a state of internal inflammation, out of breath, from exercise and suffering sharp pains in the side from the swollen fibres of his liver. Thereupon I left off too. It was done from delicacy. If I stopped at the same time, my brother would be spared a feeling of mortification at being so soon exhausted.

Well, while we were sitting down, he found himself in such a perspiration that he called for water to bathe his face. They brought it, with a shaggy towel which had been washed after yesterday's use, and had been swinging on a line worked by a pulley near the porter's lodge. As Filimatius was leisurely drying his cheeks, he said, "I wish you would dictate a pair of couplets in honour of a cloth which has done me such a noble turn". "Very well", I replied. "But you must get my name in", he rejoined. I said that there would be no difficulty in that. "Dictate away then." I smiled. "I would have you know", I said, "that the Muses are upset if I frequent their company before witnesses". At this he burst out in his explosive but delightful way (you know his ardent nature, and what an inexhaustible flow of wit he has): "Beware, my lord Sollius! Apollo may be still more upset if you tempt his pupils to secret interviews all alone". You can imagine the applause aroused by a retort as neat as it was instantaneous. I wasted no more time, but called up his secretary, who was at hand with his tablets, and dictated the following epigram:

At dawn, or when the seething bath invites,  
Or when the hot chase beads the brow,  
May goodly Filimatius with this cloth cherish his face,  
Till all the sweat flows into the thirsty fleece.

Our good friend, Epiphanius, the secretary, had hardly taken down the lines when they came to tell us that our time was up, and that the bishop was leaving his retreat; we therefore rose to go. You must not be too critical of lines written thus to order. It is another matter with the longer poem which some time ago you two asked me to write in a hyperbolical and figured style on the man who bore good fortune ill. I shall send it off to-morrow for your private revision. If you both approve of it, you can publish it under your auspices; if you condemn, you can tear it up, and forgive me as best you can. Farewell.

CCI. *On an infamous peace. Sidonius to the Lord Bishop Graecus, Bishop of Marseilles. (Translated by O. M. Dalton.)*

Here is Amantius, the usual bearer of my trifles; off once more to Marseilles to bring home a little profit out of the city, if he is fortunate in his business at the port. I could use the opportunity of his journey to gossip gaily on, if a mind that bears a load of sorrow could at the same time think of cheerful things.

For the state of our unhappy region is miserable indeed. Everyone declares that things were better in war-time than they are now after peace has been concluded. Our enslavement was made the price of security for a third party; the enslavement, ah, the shame of it,<sup>1</sup> of those Arvernians who by old tradition claimed brotherhood with Latium, and descent from the sons of Troy; who in our own time stood forth alone to stay the advance of the common enemy; who even when closely beset so little feared the Goth that they sallied out against his leaguer, and put the fear of their valour into his heart. These are the men whose common soldiers were as good as captains, but who never reaped the benefit of their victories: that was handed over for your consolation, while all the crushing burden of defeat they had to bear themselves. These are the patriots who did not fear to bring to justice the infamous Seronatus, betrayer of

<sup>1</sup> Negotiated by a commission of four bishops between the Empire and Euric, King of the Visigoths, after an heroic and successful defence of Clermont by its townsmen and their bishops against the Visigothic advance.



Imperial provinces to the barbarian, while the State for which they risked so much had hardly the courage of his conviction to carry out the capital sentence.

And this is to be our reward for braving destitution, fire, sword, and pestilence, for fleshing our swords in our enemy's blood and going ourselves starved into battle. This, then, is the famous peace we dreamed of, when we tore the grass from the crannies in the walls to eat; when in our ignorance we often by mistake ate poisonous weeds, indiscriminately plucking them with livid hands of starvation, hardly less green than they. For all these proofs of our devotion, it would seem that we are to be made a sacrifice. If it be so, may you live to blush for a peace without either honour or advantage. For you are the channel through which negotiations are conducted. When the king is absent, you not only see the terms of peace, but new proposals are brought before you.

I ask your pardon for telling you hard truths; my distress must take all colour of abuse from what I say. You think too little of the general good; when you meet in council, you are less concerned to relieve public perils than to advance private fortunes. By a long repetition of such acts you begin to be regarded as the last instead of the first among your fellow-provincials. But how long are these feats of yours to last? Our ancestors will cease to glory in the name of Rome if they have no longer descendants to bear their memory. Oh break this infamous peace at any cost; there are pretexts enough to your hand. We are ready if we needs must, to continue the struggle and undergo more sieges and starvations. But if we are to be betrayed, we whom force failed to conquer, we shall know beyond a doubt that a barbarous and cowardly transaction was inspired by you.

But it little avails to give the rein to passionate sorrow; you must make allowance for us in our affliction, nor too nicely weigh the language of despair. The other conquered regions have only servitude to expect; Auvergne must prepare for punishment. If you can hold out no hope in our extremity, seek to obtain from Heaven by your unceasing prayers that though our liberty be doomed, our race, at least, may live. Provide land



for the exile, prepare a ransom for the captive, make provision for the emigrant. If our own walls must offer an open breach to the enemy, let yours be never shut against your friends. Deign to hold me in remembrance, my Lord Bishop.

CCII. *Saint Patrick rebukes Coroticus, King of Ail, who had raided Ireland, and carried off Christians captive.*<sup>1</sup>

I, Patrick, a sinner and unlearned, declare that God created me Bishop in Ireland. Most surely I hold that it was from God that I received what I am, and therefore for the love of God I remain a pilgrim and an exile among a barbarous people. He is witness that I speak the truth. It was not my wish to utter the language of harshness and severity, but zeal for God constrains me, and the truth of Christ, who hath stirred me up for the love of my sons after the spirit, for whom I have left my country and my kindred, and am ready to give up my life also, if so be that I am worthy. I have made a vow to God to teach the heathen; let him despise me who will.

With my own hand I have composed and written these words, to be communicated to the soldiers of Coroticus; not to my fellow-citizens, nor to those who are fellow-citizens with the holy Romans, but to those who are fellow-citizens with devils, by reason of their evil deeds. Enemies of truth, they die even whilst they live, allied with the Scots and the apostate Picts, eager, as it were, to glut themselves with the blood of innocent Christians, multitudes of whom I have begotten to God and confirmed in Christ.

For a cruel slaughter and massacre was committed on the persons of the newly baptised, while they were yet in their white robes, on the morrow of their anointing, whilst the holy oil still shone upon their foreheads. Wherefore I sent a letter by a holy presbyter, whom from his infancy I had taught, together with other holy men, to entreat that they would restore some of the booty, or the baptised captives; but they scoffed at my envoys. Therefore I am in doubt for whom I should the rather mourn, whether for the slain, or for the captives, or for

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated.

those whom Satan hath so grievously ensnared, who shall be delivered over to him to eternal pains of Hell; for whosoever committeth sin is the bondservant of sin, and is called a son of the devil.

Wherefore let all men that fear God know, that parricides and fratricides are strangers from me and from Christ, my God, whose ambassador I am, for they are ravening wolves, eating up the people of the Lord as they eat bread. As He saith, Lord, the wicked have destroyed thy law, which in this latter day was auspiciously and excellently planted in Ireland, and established by the favour of God.

I do not falsely set myself up; I have a part with those who have been called and predestined to preach the Gospel amidst no small persecutions, even to the end of the earth, even though the evil eye of the enemy is upon me through the tyranny of Coroticus, who feareth not God nor his chosen priests, to whom hath been granted the high and divine power, that those whom they bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven.

The most High approveth not the gifts of the wicked; he that offereth sacrifice from the goods of the poor is as one that sacrificeth a son in the presence of his father. The riches, He saith, which he hath gathered unjustly, shall be vomited forth from his belly. The angel of death draggeth him away. He will be tormented by the fury of dragons. The viper's tongue shall slay him, unquenchable fire devoureth him. And, therefore, woe to all those who fill themselves with what is not their own. And, What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

Was it without God, or according to the flesh, that I journeyed into Ireland? Who constrained me? I am bound in the spirit no more to see my kindred. Is it from this that my devout compassion springeth, for a people which took me captive, and wrought havoc among the men-servants and maid-servants in my father's house? I am free born after the flesh; my father was a decurion. But for the profit of others I sold my noble rank, I am not ashamed, nor do I repent it. In short I am a slave in Christ to an alien people for the glory that is beyond all speech, of the Eternal Life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And if my own

people know me not—a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Not to me but to God be the praise, who put into my heart this earnest desire, that I should be one of the hunters and fishers, whom long since God foretold should come in the last days. I am envied. What shall I do, O Lord? Men despise me. Lo, around me thy sheep are pillaged and torn by these robbers afore-said, by the order of our enemy Coroticus.

Far from the love of God is he who delivereth Christians into the hand of the Scots and Picts. Ravening wolves, they have devoured the Lord's flock which in Ireland was increasing, verily, with all speed, watched over with the greatest care. The sons and daughters of the Scottish chieftains, in numbers beyond my reckoning, were becoming monks and virgins of Christ.

It is the custom of the Gauls to send to the Franks and to other alien peoples holy and fit men, provided with thousands of gold pieces to redeem baptised captives. But you who so often slay them or sell them to foreign peoples ignorant of God, delivering them over, as it were, to a brothel, what manner of hope have you in God, or he who consenteth with you, or flattereth you? God will judge, for it is written, not only those who commit evil, but those who consent with them shall be damned.

I know not what more to say or speak about the sons of God departed, slain with the sword, for it is written—weep with them that weep, and again—if one member suffer, let all the members suffer with it. Wherefore the Church weepeth and lamenteth her sons and daughters whom the sword hath not yet slain, but who are exiled, carried off to far lands, where sin openly and shamelessly aboundeth. There Christian freemen are sold and reduced to slavery, and worst of all, to the vile, degraded, and apostate Picts.

Wherefore I grieve for you, I grieve, my well-beloved, for myself, but at the same time rejoice that I have not laboured in vain, and that my pilgrimage hath not been fruitless. A crime hath been committed which is dreadful and unspeakable. Thanks to God, it was as baptised believers that you departed into Paradise from this world. I behold you, you have begun your journey to that region where there shall be no night nor sorrow nor death

any more, but ye shall leap as calves loosened from their bands, and ye shall tread down the wicked and they shall be ashes under your feet.

Ye, therefore, shall reign with apostles and martyrs, and receive an everlasting kingdom, as He himself beareth witness with you, saying—they shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and with Isaac and with Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. Without are dogs and sorcerers and murderers; and liars and false swearers shall have their part in the lake of everlasting fire. Not unjustly the Apostle saith—where the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly transgressor of the law discover himself?

Where then shall Coroticus and his accursed followers see themselves, who distribute baptised damsels among their depraved followers, and all for the sake of a wretched temporal kingdom, which passeth away in a moment like a cloud, or smoke scattered by the wind? So shall the deceitful wicked perish at the presence of the Lord, but let the righteous feast continually with Christ, and judge the nations, and rule over unjust kings for ever and ever. Amen.

I earnestly entreat whatever servant of God is willing to bear this letter, that it may on no account be kept back, or concealed by anyone, but rather may be read before all the people, in the presence of Coroticus himself—if God may inspire them at some time to amend their lives and return to Him. So that they may repent, even late, of their evil deeds, and though murderers of the Lord's brethren, may release the baptised women captives, that they may be worthy to live to God, and to be made whole from now to all eternity. Peace—in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen.



## BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

- AENEAS THE SOPHIST:** CXXXVII, CXXXVIII. *c.* A.D. 450-490. A rhetorician and student of philosophy at Gaza and Alexandria: probably Christian. He left twenty-five letters, in Greek.
- AGATHUS:** CXXV. 3rd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, xiv. No. 1677. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.
- ALCIPHRON:** CXXVI, CXXVIII, CXXIX. *c.* A.D. 160-200. An Athenian, probably a friend of Lucian, writer of imaginary letters.
- ALEXANDER THE GREAT:** XII, XIII, XIV, XV. 356-323 B.C.
- AMASIS:** XVIII. King of Egypt, *c.* 530 B.C. Polycrates took Amasis' advice, and threw his favourite ring into the sea. A fish ate it, was caught, and presented to Polycrates. The ring was found inside it. Amasis, hearing that Polycrates found even what he deliberately threw away, decided that he was doomed, and renounced his alliance with him. Polycrates was eventually crucified. This letter, from Herodotus, is perhaps hardly genuine in its present form. Trans. P. E. Laurent, revised.
- AMBROSE, SAINT:** CLXVII and CLXVIII. A.D. 340-397. Archbishop of Milan, one of the greatest of the Latin Fathers, a leader of the Catholic party against the Arians in the west, author of many works. He converted Saint Augustine, and baptised the Emperor Theodosius. His letters tell much of the political and religious history of the time, but are unfortunately overloaded with scriptural quotation and exegesis. No. CLXVIII rebukes Theodosius for the massacre at Thessalonica, by which Theodosius took revenge on the town for insurrection against the Roman officials, and their maltreatment. Theodosius was excommunicated, and obliged to perform public penance in the basilica at Milan.
- ANAXIMENES:** XXII. Philosopher of Miletus, *c.* 546-480 B.C. The letter, probably imaginary, may be as early as the 2nd century B.C. From Diogenes Laertius.
- ANTIPATER,** Governor of Cappadocia: CLIV. A friend of Basil the Great.
- ANTONIS LONGUS:** XCI. 2nd century A.D. From the Fayoum Papyri. Trans. by G. Milligan, *Greek Papyri*, No. 37. Rather an illiterate letter, not quite complete.



APION: XCI. 2nd century A.D. From the Fayoum Papyri. Trans by G. Milligan, *Greek Papyri*.

APOLLONIUS OF TYANA: XLVII, XLVIII, XLIX, died A.D. 97. An ascetic Cappadocian philosopher. Miracles were attributed to him, and attempts were made to set him up in rivalry to Jesus Christ.

APOLLO'S SON: CXL. Late 3rd century A.D. or early 4th. The writer's name does not appear in the letter, of which the beginning and end are missing. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. xiv. 1680. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

ARIUS: CXI and see CX and CXII. Founder of the important heresy that bears his name: A.D. 290-336. Probably of Libyan origin, he was a priest in Alexandria, under bishop Alexander, with whom he first joined issue on the doctrinal point. He had a large following of influential ecclesiastics, including Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, whose influence on Constantine the Great came near to making Arianism the official creed of the Church. Athanasius saw divine intervention in the manner of Arius' death: Gibbon insinuates foul play by the Catholics.

ARTIKON: NO. II. An unknown person. The letter is inscribed on lead, found at Olbia. c. 400 B.C.

ATHANASIUS, SAINT: CXII. and CXLIX. A.D. 293-373. "One of the more fashionable saints of the Arian times" (Gibbon). In 326 he became bishop of Alexandria, and led the Catholic party against the followers of Arius. Five times he was deposed and banished, and four times restored; he died in exile. He wrote numerous volumes on the Arian controversy.

AUGUSTINE, SAINT: CLXXVIII to CLXXXII. Bishop of Hippo, A.D. 354-430. Before his conversion he was a professor of rhetoric at Milan, where he made the acquaintance of Saint Ambrose, by whom he was converted. His rhetorical training partly explains the volubility of his voluminous writings. His letters, for the most part of great length, consisting of scriptural exegesis, or disquisitions on controversial points, are scarcely distinguishable from sermons. The few personal letters included here are important chiefly as being rare.

*Romanianus* was a wealthy Carthaginian, converted about the same time as Augustine.

*Nebrius* was a great friend of Augustine, who accompanied him to Milan. As a correspondent, Augustine found him lengthy and troublesome.

AUGUSTUS, EMPEROR: 63 B.C.—A.D. 14. XLII, XLIII, XLIV. The recipient of XLIII is the future Emperor Tiberius.

AUSONIUS: CXXIII. A.D. 310—395. Professor of rhetoric at the University of Bordeaux, whence he was appointed by Valentinian to be tutor to the young Gratian. Later he was Prefect of the Gauls, Prefect of the West, and Consul. After the murder of Gratian, he retired to a château in Aquitaine, to write verses. His letters are for the most part in verse, not of the best.

AVIDIUS CASSIUS: NO. LXXXVII. See Marcus Aurelius.

BASIL, SAINT: CXXIX TO CXXXI and CL to CLV. Called the Great. Bishop of Caesarea, A.D. 330—379. He came of a learned and ecclesiastical family: his brothers were Saint Gregory of Nyssa, and Naucratus, the great Christian jurist. Educated in the usual way at the schools of rhetoric of Constantinople and Athens, he was a friend of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (*q.v.*) and of Libanius (*q.v.*), and of the Emperor Julian. He set himself to reform monastic life in the east, which at the time consisted of large numbers of so-called solitary monks, living without discipline or rule, often in a scandalous way. His ideas of work and discipline are still the basis of monastic life in the Orthodox Church.

*Olympius* was Governor of Cappadocia, appealed to by both Basil and Gregory on many occasions when his intervention was desired.

CALANUS: XVI. An Indian philosopher, who followed the Macedonian army from Taxila, at the request of Alexander the Great. He fell ill, and, refusing to alter his ascetic mode of life, he burned himself solemnly on a pyre in the presence of the whole Macedonian army, without showing any sign of physical pain.

CAPITO: LVI. 1st century A.D. From the Berlin Papyri. It is suggested that Capito was a Roman veteran or freedman settled in Egypt. B. Ollsen, *Papyrusbriefe*, No. 34.

CHRYSOStOM, ST. JOHN: CLXIX-CLXXI. A.D. 345-407. Patriarch of Constantinople during the reign of the Emperor Arcadius, and the Empress Eudoxia. His early education was at Antioch under the great rhetorician Libanius (*q.v.*), to whose professorship he might have succeeded, had he not preferred an ecclesiastical career. His rhetorical gifts won him his title, "Golden-mouthed". Owing to his attempts to reform the laxity of the ecclesiastics, and luxury of the Byzantine court, he made many enemies, and alienated the great Empress Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius. Scandals arose over his

relations with a group of wealthy pious ladies, who included Olym-pias, widow of a Prefect, famous for her good works. Eventually he was exiled to Cucusus in Asia Minor, but his influence from there proving too strong, he was to be transferred to Pityos on the Black Sea, but died *en route*. His extant letters are numerous, but not equal to his famous homilies.

CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS: XXXII to XLI. 106-43 B.C. The drama of his personality, and the political history of his time, so well pictured in his letters, cannot be indicated in a small selection. Choice has been guided by the individual merit and charm of each letter, and its interest to the general reader for what picture it may afford of contemporary life.

*Terentia*, Cicero's first wife, mother of Tullia. Cicero divorced her in 46 B.C., and married a young girl, of whose property he was trustee.

*Minucius Basilus*, one of Caesar's assassins, himself murdered by his own slaves.

CLAUDIUS GOTHICUS: LXXXIX. Emperor from A.D. 268-270. An obscure Dalmatian, whose military distinction, like that of many Emperors, raised him to the purple. He defeated both the Alemanni and the Goths, the latter very thoroughly near Nish, in the engagement referred to here, which won his surname Gothicus.

CLAUDIUS LYSIAS: XLV. Tribune at Jerusalem. See Acts xxiii. 26 (Rev. Version). The interest of this letter is in the equitable attitude, frequently evident in the Acts of the Apostles, of the Roman administration towards the quarrels of Christians and Jews.

CLEOBULUS: XXI. Sage of Lindus, of the 6th century B.C. An imaginary letter from Diogenes Laertius.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT: CIX, CX. A.D. 288-337. No. CX expresses the disgust of a busy and competent Emperor at the quarrels of a Church in which he had hoped to find an instrument of union for a somewhat incoherent empire. From Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*.

CORBOLON: XCV. 2nd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. i. 113. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

CRATES: CVII, CVIII. A cynic philosopher, of the 4th century B.C. Imaginary letters of perhaps the 2nd century A.D.

CYPRIAN, SAINT: CXLVIII. Bishop of Carthage. A.D. 200-258. A Carthaginian by birth, of learned education. He was persecuted under

Decius, and, finally, under Valerian, when he was martyred in his church in the presence of his flock.

DEMETRIUS OF PHALERUM: XXIV. Died 283 B.C. Attic orator and statesman, sentenced to death, who fled to the court of Ptolemy I. The seventy-two Rabbis originated the term "Septuagint".

DEMOPHON: XXV. 245 B.C. From the Hibeh Papyri, No. 54, from the wrappings of a mummy. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

DIOCLETIAN, EMPEROR: XC. A.D. 245-313. Abdicated 304, leaving the Western Empire to Galerius. He retired to Salona, his birthplace, to indulge in gardening.

DIONYSUS, THE AREOPAGITE: CLXIV, or Pseudo-Dionysus. A writer of the 5th century A.D., about whom little is known, except that he used the name of the Areopagite in Acts xvii. 34. His works, the *Celestial Hierarchy* and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, had great importance in the Middle Ages.

DOMITIAN, EMPEROR: L. A.D. 81-96.

EPICURUS, PHILOSOPHER: IV, V, VI. c. 341-270 B.C. Founder of the philosophy that bears his name.

*Leonteus of Lampsacus* was a close friend. Themista, referred to in iv, is perhaps the daughter of the recipient Idomeneus of Lampsacus, friend of Epicurus, married to Bathis, sister of Metrodorus, a philosopher, and friend of Epicurus.

Trans. C. Bailey: *Epicurus*.

EUDAEMON, THE COIN CLIPPER: CXLIII. Early 4th century A.D. From the Fayoum Papyri, No. 134. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

EUSTATHIUS: CXVI. A Neo-Platonist philosopher of Cappadocia, an orator of charm and persuasiveness.

FAUSTINA THE YOUNGER: LXXXV. Daughter of Antoninus Pius, wife of Marcus Aurelius, who was devoted to her in spite of the rumours of her infidelity.

FIRMUS, BISHOP OF CAESAREA: CXCII. Died about A.D. 439. A vigorous theologian, who attended the Council of Ephesus, and took a sturdy part against Nestorius. A lively and charming letter-writer, he left forty-five letters, in Greek.

FLAVIUS HERCULANUS: CI. 3rd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. xiv. No. 126. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

*Aplonarion* was perhaps a former slave of Flavius Herculanus, who had been emancipated, and had married.

FRONTO, CORNELIUS: LXXVIII. A.D. 100-170. An orator and advocate, who achieved such a reputation under Hadrian that he was appointed

tutor to the young Caesars, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. He was consul in 143. He had a considerable vogue as a writer, and his admirers formed a society called the Frontoniani, which aimed at restoring the ancient purity of the Latin tongue, corrupted by the Greeks and Sophists. Trans. C. R. Haines, *Letters of Cornelius Fronto and Marcus Aurelius*, Loeb Classical Library.

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, SAINT: CLI and CLVI to CXLIH. A.D. 328-389.

The son of a bishop of Nazianzus of the same name, he was educated at the University of Athens, where he was a friend and fellow-student of Basil the Great. The friendship, which lasted till Basil's death, was not without quarrels. Basil's haughty and rather domineering spirit could not always put up with Gregory's propensity to tease: and Basil's action, in appointing him bishop of the obscure see of Sasima in Cappadocia, has never been satisfactorily explained. Gregory refers to it bitterly in his poem on his own life, and did not conceal his opinion of the honour conferred on him. In Gibbon's words, he never "consummated his spiritual union with his disgusting bride". He never went to Sasima. Later he was brought to Constantinople by the Emperor Theodosius to lead the Catholic interest against an Arian bishop and a strong Arian party. After many troubles he became bishop of Constantinople, and taught St. Jerome during his stay there. He could not, however, maintain his position against his enemies, and eventually retired to Nazianzus to write. Almost alone in his generation he was able to write letters of accomplished elegance without sacrificing spontaneity and simplicity.

*Olympius*. See Basil the Great.

*Nicobulus*. Husband of Gregory's favourite niece, *Alypiana*.

*Amphilochius*. Archbishop of Iconium, considered the foremost divine in Asia, after Basil and Gregory.

*Procopius*, uncle and guardian of Olympias (see under Chrysostom).

HADRIAN, EMPEROR: LXXVI and LXXVII. A.D. 76-138. Cf. Trajan's No. LXXV. No. LXXVII, translated by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt from the Fayoum Papyri, is not in Hadrian's own hand, but from a child's copy-book.

HERMIAS: XXVIII. 112 B.C., from the Tebtunis Papyri, i. No. 33. Trans. B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt and J. G. Smyly. On the crocodile god of Lake Moeris, see Herodotus ii. 69, Strabo xvii.

- HORUS: LIX. Late 1st century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, ii. No. 299. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.
- ILARION: LIII. 1 B.C. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. iv. No. 744. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. In this letter the word Apollinarion is doubtful, and there is uncertainty as to whether it is the name of an animal or of a person. I prefer the editors' alternative hypothesis that Apollinarion was a slave, and have substituted "child" for the vaguer word "offspring". There is no reason to recoil from the supposition that a slave's child might be exposed, if it turned out to be of the wrong sex.
- INNOCENT I., POPE: CLXXVII. Died A.D. 417. Son of Pope Anastasius I. He had a troubled reign, which saw the siege of Rome by Alaric, and the fury of the Pelagian controversy, which is reflected in this letter. He asserted the supremacy of the Roman See in disputes, and strove to centralise them at Rome, instead of allowing them to be fought out locally between the Saints.
- ISIAS: XXVI. 168 B.C. A papyrus letter from Memphis: British Museum Papyri, No. 42. The erring husband seems to have taken refuge at the Serapeum, where it was apparently usual to perform a "retreat", or undergo temporary monastic vows. Trans. by G. Milligan, *Greek Papyri*, No. 4.
- ISIDORA: LIV. 28 B.C. From a papyrus from Busiris, in the Cairo Museum. This letter is one of a group of seven between two or three brothers and their sister Isidora, who was probably the wife of one of them. B. Ollssen, *Papyrusbriefe*, No. 3.
- ISIDORE, SAINT, OF PELUSIUM: CXC. Died about A.D. 449. An Alexandrian monk, a devoted adherent of Saint Chrysostom. He left over two thousand letters, in Greek, which are said to be only one-fifth of what he wrote.
- ISIDORUS: CII. 3rd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, i. No. 121. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.
- ISOCRATES: XI. The Attic Orator. 436-338 B.C.
- JEROME, SAINT: CLXXIV to CLXXIX. c. A.D. 331 or 348-420. The most learned of the Latin Fathers, a great linguist and scholar. He revised the old Latin Bible, and translated the Septuagint into Latin. The last thirty-one years of his life were spent translating and writing in a monastery which he founded at Bethlehem, a great monastic centre in the first centuries, whither many pious persons, of both sexes, including Paula and her daughter Eustochium, followed him, and lived a religious life. He indulged not at all moderately



in the controversies of the time, and could quarrel vigorously with his friends, as letter ccxviii shows.

*Marcella*, a wealthy Roman lady who lived as under a monastic rule, in a great house on the Aventine, and led a circle of rich and religious ladies, including Paula and Eustochium.

JOVIAN, EMPEROR: CXXI. A.D. 363-364.

JULIAN, FLAVIUS CLAUDIANUS, EMPEROR, called the Apostate: CXIII to CXX. A.D. 361-363. Nephew of Constantine the Great, brought up amid the murders of his relatives, in virtual imprisonment, he spent his time in the study of classic culture and thought, which gave him a contempt for the contemporary Church, with its furious controversies and shameless rivalries. His apostasy may have taken place while he was quite young, and he may have dissimulated for about ten years. At Athens he learned rhetoric, and made friends with the learned men and rhetoricians of his time. His practical genius could not develop till he was called by Constantius to check the Franks and Alemanni on the Rhine. His success, and the consequent restoration of peace in Gaul, won him popularity which alarmed Constantine, and precipitated the events in cxvii and cxviii: the sequel was his rapid march across South Germany and down the upper Danube to Sirmium, where, on the eve of battle, he heard of Constantius' sudden death. cxviii reveals what Julian's intentions had been, and shows his superstitious belief in a special divine protection.

JULIUS CAESAR, XXIX and XXX, and see XXXIX: 100-44 B.C. XXIX shows Caesar at his briefest. Oppius and Cornelius were close friends of Caesar's, who had the management of his property and affairs.

LIBANIUS: CXXVIII to CXXXVI. A.D. 314-391. Greek sophist and rhetorician. Born at Antioch, he studied at Athens, where he knew Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus. He taught at Constantinople and Nicomedia, and finally retired to his native town, where he became famous as a teacher. He left over a thousand letters, some orations, and an autobiography describing the university life of Athens in the fourth century.

LUCIUS BELLENUS GEMELLUS: LVII and LVIII. c. A.D. 99. A Roman veteran, farming in Egypt. From the Fayoum Papyri, III and II 9. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. Several of his letters, some in his own handwriting, and some farming accounts were found. See also Westermann, *An Egyptian Farmer*.

- LUCIUS: c. Late 2nd or early 3rd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. vi. No. 928. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.
- LUCIUS VERUS: LXXXIII. Emperor with Marcus Aurelius. Son of Lucius Aelius Caesar, originally adopted by Hadrian as his successor, who died prematurely. Marcus Aurelius raised Lucius Verus to be emperor with himself, and from 161 to 169 the empire was for the first time divided. Trans. C. R. Haines, *Letters of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius*, Loeb Classical Library.
- MARCUS AURELIUS: Emperor from A.D. 161-180. LXXVIII to LXXXVIII. The letters from the correspondence with his tutor Fronto are sillier than would be expected from the author of the *Meditations*; many are youthful productions.
- Avidius Cassius*, Governor of Syria, was a severe disciplinarian, who crucified and cut off hands in punishment for small offences. Eventually he raised a revolt, but was killed by his own soldiers.
- Trans. C. R. Haines, *Letters of Cornelius Fronto and Marcus Aurelius*, Loeb Classical Library.
- MARCUS CAELIUS RUFUS: XXXI. A young friend of Cicero, of some importance, he had an intrigue with Clodia.
- MARTIAL: LXI. M. Valerius, the epigrammatist. c. A.D. 40-104. Preface to Epigrams, Bk. 12.
- MNESIERGUS: I. An unknown person, late 5th century B.C. This is the earliest Greek letter known, on a lead tablet in the Berlin Museum. Trans. A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*.
- NILUS: CLXXIII. A famous ascetic of Sinai at the close of the 4th century A.D. He left the office of Prefect of Constantinople, his wife and his children, and retired to Mount Sinai. He wrote enormous numbers of letters; was much troubled by the assaults of demons and Saracens.
- A NOTARY: CXLII. 3rd or 4th century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.
- OLYMPIAS: XIV. Wife of Philip of Macedon, mother of Alexander the Great. The legend that an enormous serpent had been found in her bed was supposed to indicate that the father of Alexander was not Philip, but Zeus. A similar legend is told of the mother of Scipio Africanus. See Aul. Gellius, *Attic Nights*, xiii. 4, and vi. 1.
- PAPYRUS LETTERS: The rolls of papyrus documents collected during the last hundred years, and latterly unearthed, in the Fayoum and other districts of the Nile valley, include many private letters. The

writers, with one or two exceptions, are unknown persons, of Greek and Roman culture or extraction, inhabitants of small towns, farmers, soldiers and slaves. The letters are in Greek, sometimes written by the correspondents themselves, sometimes dictated to professional scribes. See Introduction, pp. 22-23, and Sections 3, 5, 7, 10.

**PATRICK, SAINT:** CCII. First Archbishop of Armagh. A.D. 387-493. Son of a Roman patrician, Calphurnius, who was decurio in south-west Britain. His mother, Conchessa, who was Gallic or British, was related to Saint Martin of Tours. Patrick was carried off by pirates to Ireland, and for six years was a shepherd in Antrim, during which time he experienced a call to convert the Irish. He escaped, and reached his home in Britain, whence he went to Tours and to Lérins, to study with the great Christian scholars in Gaul. He never relinquished his purpose of converting the Irish, and eventually embarked for Ireland on a formal mission authorised by Pope Celestius I. His few surviving writings are his Confession, the letter to Coroticus included here, and a magnificent lyrical prayer, or vow, known as St. Patrick's Breastplate.

*Coroticus* was a marauding chieftain from the Solway district or the Lowlands.

See J. B. Bury, *Life of St. Patrick*.

**PAUL THE APOSTLE:** CXLVII. Trans. Revised Version.

**PAULINUS OF NOLA:** CLXV. A.D. 353-431 A younger contemporary and friend of Ausonius, originally of similar tastes and training, who had a call to the religious life, left his friends and pursuits, and retired to a life of asceticism at Nola, where he became bishop.

**PAUSANIAS:** CXLI. Late 3rd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. xiv. 1666. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

**PAUSANIAS:** VII. The Spartan General. *d. c.* 471 B.C. The hero of Plataea.

**PERIANDER:** XVII. Tyrant of Corinth. 625-585 B.C. He killed his wife by throwing a footstool at her. The letter is from Diogenes Laertius, most probably imaginary, perhaps as early as the 2nd century B.C.

**PETALE:** CIV. This letter is imaginary, by Alciphron, 2nd century A.D.

**PETENEPHES:** XXVII. *c.* 114 B.C. From the Tebtunis Papyri, vol. i. No. 57. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt and J. G. Smyly. The recipient's name is missing.

**PHILIP OF MACEDON:** IX, X. 382-336 B.C. Father of Alexander the Great; a friend of Aristotle.

PHILISTA: XXIII. c. 221 B.C. A papyrus letter from Mittheis: *Chrestomathie* 48. Addressed to Ptolemy Euergetes.

PHILOSTRATUS: CV and CVI. A rhetorician and man of letters of the time of Septimius Severus, at whose court, under the patronage of the learned Syrian Empress Julia Domna, letters and learning were fashionable. At her request he undertook the life of Apollonius of Tyana. Most of his letters are imaginary, and monotonously erotic; their sole value is in their influence on Ben Jonson.

PISAIS: LX. About A.D. 50. From the Fayoum Papyri. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

PLATO: III. The philosopher. c. 429-347 B.C. The thirteen letters once ascribed to Plato are now rejected by nearly all critics as spurious. This letter is included on the authority of the most recent criticism, which finds reason for accepting it as genuine. See L. A. Post, *The Thirteen Epistles of Plato*. Owing to its great length it has been slightly abbreviated. Trans. by L. A. Post.

*Archytas*, a Greek of Tarentum, mathematician, general and statesman, a friend both of Dionysius and of Plato.

*Dionysius*, the younger, tyrant of Syracuse, born about 431. His court was a resort of philosophers and men of letters.

PLINY THE YOUNGER: C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus. LXII to LXXV. A.D. 62-c. 120. Nephew of Pliny the Elder, author of the *Natural History*, whose death in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 is described here. He was consul for part of the year 100, and in 110, owing to a friendship with Trajan, was appointed Governor of Bithynia, a province addicted to financial corruption and in need of reform. His claim to fame rests on his nine books of letters, which enjoyed a reputation second only to Cicero's. Trans. Wm. Melmoth, revised and corrected by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.

*Calpurnia* was Pliny's second wife.

*Septitius Clarus* was Praetorian Prefect under Hadrian: he is the recipient of Pliny's introductory letter, and Suetonius' *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* was dedicated to him.

*Cornelius Tacitus* is the famous historian.

*Quintilian* is the great rhetorician, author of *Institutio Oratoria*.

PLUTARCH: LII. Author of the *Lives* and other works. A.D. 46-125. Greek by birth, educated at Athens, he lived and wrote for some time at Rome. Trajan gave him consular rank, Hadrian made him

Procurator of Greece. Owing to its great length, the letter has had to be slightly abbreviated.

PROBUS: CXLIV. 4th century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. xvi. No. 1673. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

PROCOPIUS, of Gaza: CXXXIX. A Christian sophist who lived between A.D. 465 and 528, teacher of rhetoric, and writer of theological works. His letters are not very numerous, and, considering his profession, full of interest and charm.

SARAPION: LV. About A.D. 39. From a papyrus in Berlin. B.G.U. No. 1078. Trans. G. Milligan, *Greek Papyri*.

SENECA, PHILOSOPHER: LI. A.D. 2-66. A Spaniard of Cordova, son of the rhetorician, and brother of Gallio, the Governor of Achaia, of the Acts. Educated at Rome, for a time tutor to Nero, he was finally suspected in connection with the conspiracy of Piso, and sentenced to death. He opened his veins before execution. This is the first of his series of letters to Licinius, moral essays rather than private letters, preferred by Montaigne to all his other writings. Trans. T. Morell.

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS, EMPEROR: LXXXVIII. Reigned A.D. 193-211.

*Pescennius Niger* was a pretender declared Emperor by the soldiers in Syria. Severus defeated him in a battle at Issus, in which he was slain.

SERENILLA: XCVIII. Late 2nd or early 3rd century A.D. A papyrus letter from Helbing, *Auswahl aus griechischen Papyri*, No. 19.

SERENUS: XCIV (to his wife and sister Isidora). 2nd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. iii. No. 528. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

SERENUS: XCVII (to Theon). 2nd century A.D. From the Tebtunis Papyri, vol. i. No. 315. Trans. by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt and J. G. Smyly. The names Serenus and Theon have been supplied to cover lacunae in the text, as being common in the papyri. In the last line but one, "figs" have been supplied for the same reason.

SIDONIUS, GAIUS SOLLIUS APOLLINARIS: CXCIH to CCI. A.D. 431-489. Bishop of Clermont, poet and letter writer, one of the most attractive personalities in this book, was the foremost representative of Latin letters in his century, and of that Romano-Gallic society which was the centre of Latin culture at the close of the Western Empire. For Sidonius' life, see Introduction, pp. 27-28. Trans. by O. M. Dalton, the *Letters of Sidonius*.

*Graecus* was bishop of Marseilles, and was a member of the commission of bishops who negotiated the peace with Euric, which secured peace for the Massilians at the price of ceding Auvergne to the Visigoths.

SOLON OF ATHENS: XIX, XX. Archon 594 B.C., poet and law-giver, thrown out of power in Athens by Pisistratus. These letters are probably imaginary, and may date from the 2nd century B.C. From Diogenes Laertius.

STEPHANUS: XCIV. 3rd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. vii. No. 1065. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. The threat to the gods occurs in other papyrus letters: a petition on the back of this letter shows that the misfortune referred to was an alleged unfair division of land.

SULPICIUS SEVERUS: CLXVI. Priest and historian, author of the *Life of St. Martin of Tours*; a member of the religious and learned society of men and women which adorned Aquitaine in the fourth century.

SYMMACHUS, QUINTUS AURELIUS: CXXIV to CXXVII. A.D. 340-402. Prefect of Rome and consul, President of the Senate and Pontifex Maximus, one of the last public champions of paganism in a world becoming rapidly Christian. He led a circle of aristocratic and pious pagans, which included a certain number of Christians. The rivalry between the two cults seems to have led to no bitterness of personal feeling: he retained a friendship with Saint Ambrose, while conducting a bitter struggle with him under Valentinian II. on the restoration of the Altar of Victory in the Senate. He left over eight hundred letters, most of them colourless and dull, the productions of social etiquette rather than of unself-conscious intimacy.

SYNESIUS: CLXXXIII to CLXXXIX. A.D. 370-413. Bishop of Ptolemais. A native of Cyrene, a philosopher of the Neo-platonic school, and follower of the great Hypatia, under whom he studied at Alexandria. Later he settled on his estates at Cyrene, farming and continuing his philosophical and mathematical studies, much disturbed, however, by hordes of marauding Libyans, against whom, owing to the slackness of the Roman military administration, he was obliged to organise resistance and practically to wage war. He spent three years in Constantinople on a mission to beg for a remission of taxes, during which period he delivered his oration, "On Kingship". In 409, much against his conscience, and without previous



spiritual rank, he was invited to become bishop of Ptolemais. His opinions, which owing to his philosophic training were far from orthodox, hardly fitted him for such a career: but, like Gregory of Nazianzus, Theodoret, Libanius' friend Optimus, and, later, Sidonius, he was obliged to submit. Trans. by Augustine Fitzgerald.

TARE: CXLVI. 5th century A.D. A papyrus letter from Collart, *Les Papyrus Bouriant*, No. 25.

THEMISTOCLES, VIII. The Athenian general, died about 460 B.C. He commanded the Athenian fleet at Salamis.

THEODORET: CXCIH. A.D. 393-457. Bishop of Cyrrhus, one of the most important theologians of the fifth century. Like many others of his time, he was compelled against his will to be a bishop. His most important work is the *Ecclesiastical History*. His letters are numerous and full of interest.

THEODOSIUS: EMPEROR, called the Great: CXXII and see CLXVIII. Born A.D. 346, emperor 379-395, appointed by Gratian to succeed Valens in the East, to stay the depredations of the Goths adrift in the Eastern Empire, and to check the Huns in Dacia. He was a great friend of Saint Ambrose, who had baptised him and engaged his support for the Catholic party in the Church. See *Ambrose*.

*Maximus*, a Spanish usurper from Britain, invaded Gaul, and pursued Gratian to Lyons; he was permitted by Theodosius, after Gratian's murder, to hold the countries beyond the Alps for a short time. Maximus failed to confine himself beyond these limits, and was defeated by Theodosius at Aquileia in 388, and decapitated by the soldiers forthwith.

THEON: XCVI. 2nd or 3rd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. i. 119. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. The letter is faulty in both grammar and spelling.

THEONAS: XCIH. Early 2nd century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, xii. 1481. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

THEOPHILUS: CLXXII. Patriarch of Alexandria about 385. Like most African prelates, he was violent and impetuous, addicted to persecution, and to quarrelling with the contemporary leaders in the Church. He destroyed the pagan temples in Alexandria; riots ensued in which Christians were slain, and the Temple of Serapis burnt.

TRAJAN, EMPEROR: LXIX to LXXV. A.D. 50-117. Letter No. LXXV compares interestingly with LXXVII on the same subject. Trans. Wm.

Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, Loeb Classical Library.

TROPHIMUS: CXLV. Late 3rd or early 4th century A.D. From the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. viii. No. 1160. Trans. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt.

VESPASIAN, EMPEROR: XLVI. Reigned A.D. 69-79.







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